# THE VOYAGE OF ITHOBAL

. . . . Libya shows itself to be surrounded by water, except so much of it as borders upon Asia. Neco, king of Egypt, was the first we know of, that proved this; he, when he had ceased digging the canal leading from the Nile to the Arabian Gulf, sent certain Phoenicians in ships, with orders to sail back through the Pillars of Hercules, into the Northern Sea, and so return to Egypt. The Phoenicians accordingly, setting out from the Red Sea, navigated the Southern Sea; when autumn came, they went ashore and sowed the land, by whatever part of Libya they happened to be sailing, and waited for the harvest; and having reaped the corn, they put to sea again. When two years had thus passed, in the third, having doubled the Pillars of Hercules, they arrived in Egypt, and related what to me does not seem credible, but may to others, that as they sailed round Libya, they had the sun on their right hand. Thus was Libya first known.—HERODOTUS: *Melpomene*, 42.

# THE VOYAGE OF ITHOBAL

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THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

WITH GRATEFUL AFFECTION

TO HIS WIFE

TAMA

BY THE AUTHOR

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THE VOYAGE OF ITHOBAL—

# THE VOYAGE OF ITHOBAL

## FOREWORD

### (IN THE MUSEUM)

HALF in earnest, and half in play,
We talked, by the mummied Dead, that day,
Noting the bones of the catalogued Pharaohs,
Princes and Scribes of a world far away;

Priests, with their lean brown bodies a-row,
In Egypt embalmed many ages ago;
Waiting their souls,—which did never reclaim them,
What kept ye belated, Souls? Make us know!

But, under the glass, at the gallery's end,
Two gilded coffers our converse suspend,
A dark, sweet, high-bred visage of Egypt
Limned on the cedar: Inside, at bend

Of elbow—armlets with scarabs and gold,
Gold rings on the delicate fingers, and fold
    Of linen on linen, stained blue and purple,
Binding dried bosom. A comb did hold—

A comb of coral—the rusted tress
Laid, in a braid of lost loveliness,
    On shapely brow and mouldered temple
Of the stately, holy, and proud Princess;

For the name of that Lady was plain to view
Nesta, the Priestess of Amen-Ru
    And Gods and Kâs had been set to guard her
Asleep, while the slow-footed years crept through.

Bright were those eyes once—starry bright,
Whose beauty gone was mocked by the light
    Of agate and nacre—embalmer's symbols
For lustre departed. Oh! of her right

Royal or high-blooded: a cartouche set
Gives sign of the household of Hapshepket,
    And, over the heart-spot, you see a tablet
From the "Book of the Dead" inscribed "*Now let*

"*No hindrance come at my Judgment-Hour,*
*Nor Mût be stern, nor the Measurer's power*

*In the balance of Thoth, when my heart is lying,*
*May Anubis have me in grace!"* A Flower

Of Nile's best gardens, no doubt! Beneath
The second chest showed us a painted wreath
Of ships and sailors, and strange sea-monsters,
And rocks that rise, and waves that seethe

Round some high soul to Amenti fled:
And the hieroglyphs for the style of the Dead
Ran *Ethbaal, the son of Magon*, blended
'Mid boats and rowers, and Gods, with head

Of ibis, or lion, or jackal, or ape:
Yet ever, and foremost, recurred the shape
Of Kneph with the ram's horns, Kneph the Master
Of Storms, and of Seas, and the Southward Cape

Where all Seas finish. "Certes," I said;
"Some Man of Phœnicia! a Mariner, led
By fate, or love, or venture, to Egypt
In the old, old times; and they claimed him dead.

"Ask if in life they did meet, as in death;
Find out, Dear, what that hidden sign saith:

Sometimes you tell me of things we behold not,
Life beyond living, speech subtler than breath."

She laughed. But quickly her laughter died;
Her brown eyes misted, though fixed and wide
Through all her body ran tender tremors,
Silent and rigid she pressed to my side.

. . . . . . . . . . .

Presently, "Yes!" she sighed, "I have willed!
The place with the Presences is filled!
I have seen that Lady! Ah! how she loved him!
Nesta of Saïs: you would have thrilled

At beauty so rich and bold and splendid
(Well might he worship!) 'Twas done and ended
Twenty-five centuries back—yon Hodo
To say to me this from his shelf descended:"

*"I, Hodo—scribe—at Pharaoh's bidding, penned*
*Dread tales, from their beginning to their close*
*Out of the mouth of Ithobal of Tyre*
*Chief Captain of the sea, who, by strange ways,*
*Saw the Dark World, and went and came. He spak*
*In Phenku, on his face before the King:—*
*(With whom be peace, and health and length of days!*
*On slabs of stone I wrote it—month of Bul—*

*Ninth year of Neko. May the Lord of Kings*
*Show mercy, and forgive this scribe his faults!*

"Do you hear?—He wrote, by the King's desire
From lips of Ethbaal, famous in Tyre—
The chief Sea-Captain—a marvellous story
Of ships which sailed thro' tempest and fire,

And darkness and perils, and nether dread
To lands and waters where none had sped:
To Libya's Horn—Ah! here is another
Who will not be still, till his story is said:

A learned one that must speak with me,
Reader in Pharaoh's Court was he,
Who knew the tongues and wrote the Scriptures,
And this, he doth urge, must imparted be.

"*I, Tchat-Kensu, Reciter to the King,*
*Read Hedo's stones, and did them into script*
*By order of the King, that he might hear,*
*Again, and yet again, at resting hours,*
*The wonders of that sailing of the seas;*
*Also, that men to come, finding new worlds*
*And haply, learning more the ways of Gods,*
*Bear themselves humble, being 'ware that deeds*
*Greater than theirs' were wrought in days before.*

"Have you heard? This sage, one—this Tchat-
Kensu
Lord of the Records and bidden thereto—
Tells how he pictured that story of Hodo
In hieroglyphs. He says, "*I rue*

"*My lost scrolls more than my life, which is nought,*
*For this was the mightiest marvel wrought*
*On all the waters, from World's beginning*
*Till the earth and the sea shall end.*" Methought

To ask of Ithobal—"Nay!" she replied
"They are gone! He, too, the man, dark-eyed
Terrible, noble, in Tyrian garments,
With the great sword girded upon his side.

"Yet Nesta lingers, and seems would sing:
Strange I can follow this ancient thing!
Nesta of Saïs—shaking her sistrum—
Chanting the tale of the ships of the King.

"I think she would tell us how Ithobal stood
At Pharaoh's feet in his goodlihood;
The brown crews kneeling around, the people
Open-eyed, wide-mouthed, in earnest mood

To catch those words of the wonderful sailing
When, danger with daring countervailing
    All round that land of the nethermost darkness,
This Captain of Tyre came back prevailing.

*(A Voice is heard)*

"*Saïs, City of Neith,*
*Flickered and danced in the glare:*
*Danced in the blazing gold of the noon;*
*Temples and gateways and trees,*
*Like unto Temple-girls did these*
*Dance for the glory of Neith;*
*Golden and green and white and brown,*
*So did the houses and groves and town,*
*Walls, roofs, window-bars, up and down*
*Dance for the glory of Neith.*
*Shadows glanced on the glass of the lake,*
*Palm-fans danced in the fluttering air,*
    *All for the Light's sweet sake;*
*For the Goddess, mighty and glad and fair,*
*Who makes for her people the golden day*
*And the dear delight of the sun-warmed air.*
*Twenty-five centuries back.—*
*Ah, can you listen to what I say?—*
*Egypt under the sunshine lay,*
*Basking in gold and black.*

"*Neko was Pharaoh and King*
*Ruler of Nile and its lands,*
*Lord of River and fields,*
*Holding the World in his hands.*

"*Crowded is Pharaoh's hall;*
*Columns painted and tall,*
*Cut from the rosy stones of Nile,*
*Lead to the sculptured wall;*
*Where the Lord of Egypt throned in state*
*With glad and gracious ear doth wait*
*To hear what story his ships have brought*
*From the great deed wrought*
*By him who sailed at the King's command*
*To the Dark and Dread of the Nether Land,*
*And have come alive from those realms of death.*
'*We will hear, we will hear, what he saith*'
*Hath issued decree, and the King doth sit*
*To listen to all the marvel of it,*
*With Princes and priests and slaves about,*
*And of sailors and negroes a rout;*
*Yet all eyes bound*
*Not upon Pharaoh's face, but his*
*Who in the midst of this,*
*His brown crew kneeling anigh, recites,*

*While Hodo the writer writes*
*How he hath come and how he did go*
*By ways on the waters which none did know.*

*"Who is this that is standing,*
*Greater than Pharaoh is great,*
*Wearing no robe of state,*
*But lordly, large, and commanding;*
*And in his eyes the fire*
*Of the* Hawk of Horus, *when out of the cloud*
*He stoops, and his hot desire*
*Is quenched in the flesh of the quarry slain,*
*And the bold bird glides again*
*Back to his niche in the temple wall?*
*Ithobal in that hall*
*Satisfied, resolute, stained by the Sun,*
*Telleth to Pharaoh what things he hath done;*
*So did my lord to the King*
*Relate this marvellous thing."*

# THE FIRST DAY

## THE FIRST DAY

*Ithobal, Captain of the Sea,*
*Thus spake how it befell that he*
*Of Pharaoh's ships did have command*
*To sail unto the unseen land.*

LONG life to Pharaoh! May the high Gods make
Ever his greatness greater! I am he,
His servant and the Captain of his ships,
Ithobal, born of Tyre, bred by marge
Of sea, and nursed upon the breast of the sea,
To learn her ways, as little children learn
The anger and the tenderness of her
Who feeds, and chides, and fashions them to men.

Lo! as land-dwellers con the ways of earth,
The chariot-road; the camel's path in the sand,
The halting places and the drinking wells,
And where will be good grass, and where the rocks
Hide robbers, and the swamp is home for snakes,
And what to-morrow's march shall bring of hap,
If sun sets ruddy, if he rises pale;

So grew I from the first to know my sea,
My ship's path on the purple and the green,
The friendly reefs would give her refuges,
The rugged deadly coasts that she must shun,
And where fair water was and pirates lurked,
And how to hold a vessel's painted eyes
Straight to the furrow that her stem must plough
Over those dancing meadows of the deep,
All day by golden guidance of the sun,
All night with shimmer of the Star of Tyre,
Set in the north by Ishtar for our sakes.
This lore of the wide waters I did gain,
And ere my chin was bearded sailed and sailed
Over the midland main; threading the isles
Coasting the Greek and Tuscan gulfs; one year
Moored to a Libyan palm tree, and the next
Rocking beneath black shade of northern pines.
So did I win, ere I was man, as far
As where the Western gateway of that sea
Opens by Kalpe and the seven-topped mount
Into what no man knoweth of—a waste
Of waves as vast as time and dark as death,
Wherein the sun himself did die each night,
Plunging, 'twas said, with seethe of dripping gold
Into the blue. Voyaging home again

With many a Keel I searched the sea of Suph
Which washes Misraim, and the emerald hills,
And all thy Libya down to distant Punt,
And where by Gate of Wailing one might come,
If one dared come, into the nether worlds.
Wherefrom five years ago returning, full
Of perils past and passion to meet more,
I broke my galley on a bladdered shelf
Which lay in the dark like shadow of a cloud.
We shed upon the brine gilt cloths enough
To robe it like an arch-priest, and of spice
Rich bales to sweeten all its bitter salt
With fragrance such as have the breasts of her
Who lies by Syria's Lord. My ship I lost,
My goods, my gathered profit, and my crew,
Save certain here whom the deep cannot drown,
Storm-seasoned against Fate. With these came I
Beggared to Saïs but for one rare pearl,
Fished on a moonlit night by the Isle of Birds,
Which lay, a moon itself, safe at my waist.
So wended I, stripped by my mother-sea,
Angry, to Tyre, the great pearl in my belt
And that hard hunger gnawing at my heart,
To find what lay beyond the Uttermost
Whence storm and death did drive back Ithobal.

But what the high gods will the high gods bring
After their fashion. Wrathfully I lay
In shadow of Lord Melkarth's marble house
That looks o'er many-storied Tyre, and dips
In the Sidonian port its image wan.
Listless I lay, bewailing evil fate,
Life broken like my ship, my fruitless gifts
On Ishtar's altar; when a silver dove—
Ishtar's own bird it seemed—lit at my foot,
Preening its shining feathers, stretching forth
Its glittering neck, and with red pattering feet
Hither and thither pacing, out of reach
As who would tempt to follow. Half amazed,
Half wayward, I pursue the eluding bird
Which flutters, all its silver in the sun
Asparkle, down the steps of the temple porch,
Over the paved way, through the Tanners' Street,
Along the quay where murex-fishers press
The purple from the sea-shells, at each flight
Lending me promise I might stroke the wings
Twinned-argent, and perchance capture the prize,
The wonder, all of living lustre made.
So did it draw me, foolish, blind, bemused,
Into the quarter of the slave-market;
Then with light beat of pinion soared away
T'ward Ishtar's shrine.

In ill-content I raised
The curtain of the market-entry; there
The brokers with their tablets and their scales
Sold boys and women for the temple chests,
As is the wont. A shaded closure gave
Shelter to buyers, and a stage arose,
By steps attained, where one by one were set
The slaves, the votive maidens, and the spoil
Of war or traffic. Loud the clamour was
Of wrangling scribes and haggling customers
Computing and disputing. Not before
Witnessed I this, and had no mood to stay;
For the great sea is jealous, and my heart
Until that day had followed only her,
Knowing not, or but scantly, what new might
May spring forth from an eye-glance, and what spells
Bind boldest spirits with a touch or tone:
And how a woman's hair may hold the soul
The storm-rope of a galley could not check.
Moreover what the Gods decree will be.

For, Mighty Pharaoh! as I turned on heel
They lead upon the platform, for vile sale,
Undraped, before those buyers clinking gold

This one—this lady of my life and deeds,
Who kneeleth thy veiled handmaid here to-day;
Chosen by Ishtar, guardian and guide
Of our vast travel, and to bring thee here
This day, dread king! the glory never matched
Of nether worlds unlocked, Heaven's secrets told:
Seeing that it befell at moment when
They bared her proud and glorious goodlihood
To that coarse crowd, and cried her prices forth,
I knew my fate shewn in the queenly face,
The eyes, high-couraged mid their pain and shame,
The mouth, tender and proud, with lips as red
As new pomegranate buds, and teeth as white
And even as a row in the opening corn:
In stature a dark Cypress, in her step
A free gazelle of the desert, of that throng
Mistress and Scorner though the knotted cord
Lay shameful on her neck; the master's mark
Was set on cloth of Africa she bore,
Now rudely reft. Then knew I why the bird
Fluttered and fooled me to this selling spot—
A dove of living silver whoe'er saw?—
Then knew I that this woman must be mine,
Though she cost gold—though she cost stars—cost
life!

But not yet knew I how the most wise Gods
Had hid their secret in her and bestowed
By love my triumph.

From long distant springs
Whence old Nile flows in lands without a name
Captive she came, from royal palace torn
In some realm far away, 'neath other stars—
Well nigh another world; by native suns
Stamped the soft colour of the ripening date;
Skin like the three-plied byssus Sidon weaves;
Visage and mien of Princess, born to sway;
Of fear and shame and falseness innocent;
And speaking speech as gentle as when morn
Whispers in palm tops. For she marked me, too,
And shot one quick glance from those lustrous orbs
Then, beckoning me, murmured in broken words:
"Thou, thou, at last, my Lord! Buy me, I pray!
Many a night I saw thee in my dreams:
Thou art the man of Tyre, strong Ithobal,
A master of the sea, and I am thine,
Thy servant and thy helper like the sea;
I have an errand to thee from the Gods;
Buy me, my master, I shall pay thee back

Thereat astonied, joyous, yet perplexed,

I stood with them that bid; and one cried thus,
Another thus much more, another more,
And yet another most, till one grey lord
Tore from his wrinkled neck the chain of sards
Carved curious in Egypt, laid in gold,
And spake, "Sir broker! thou dost put to sale
A moon of heaven; 'twere worth an old man's wealth
To die on such a bosom; look! I give
My chain for gage that I will melt my ships,
Three Keels of Tarshish, into what shall pay
Ten thousand ounces for thy Nesta there."

Then the beards wagged and baffled dealers drew
Forth from the press, while the slave-master said:
"The proffer of Lord Eshmûn is well made;
A moon from heaven is this rare Libyan girl—
Good market at ten thousand ounces; yet
Our Tyrian law forbids we sell a slave
Without the leave once to deny herself
To owner undesired, if that she find
Another to her mind will overpass
The topmost offer. Lady, dost thou take
Lord Eshmûn for thine owner, or wilt name
Some other venturer who liketh thee,

If such a buyer be?" The girl, at this,
Quoth softly, "Sell me to Lord Ithobal."

And some waxed wroth, and some laughed scornfully,
But I, with angry hand, loosening my hilt,
Strode forward of them, and from forth my waist
Drew the great pearl and said, "Sir broker! ask
Thy fellows of the scale what worth holds that
Measured in ounces? I do give it thee
To buy this maiden." Then their puckered eyes
Hung o'er the milky treasure, and they smote
Their breasts and cried, "This is a wonder-stone;
Its like was never seen save on the throat
Of Thammuz when he roved with Heav'n's bright
Queen,
And got for love-gifts certain of the stars.
If those three ships ten thousand ounces fetch,
Lord Eshmûn, this could build as many more;
Wilt thou give twenty thousand ounces told,
Bidding the Tyrian Captain keep his pearl?"
But that grey lord across an evil face
Drew his fringed-cloth, departing; and we came,
Nesta and I, unto my house in Tyre.

In that new air of love, so sweet, so strange,
Many days digged I; and did quite forget

My calling, and the calling of the sea;
More and more gathering from her honeyed lips
What wisdom and what wonders lay behind
The brow and breasts of sun-stained ivory:
Learning to better know her foreign speech,
Which mingled with the language later taught:
Sometimes reciting,—head upon her knees,
Or pillowed on her neck,—tales of old Tyre,
Of Melkarth's fane, and of high Ashtaroth,
The seven great Gods without a name, the loves
Of Shadîd and the Moon. Or she would sing
Soft songs in unknown cadences, to beat
Of snake-skin, or of silver sistrum's thrill,
Moving the mind to passion or to peace,
As storms and light winds stir the waves. But I
Noted no waves—albeit our lattice gave
Full on the Egyptian harbour, where there came
By sunlight, and by stargleam, goodly craft—
Two-banked and three-banked,—mighty ships of war,
Girdled with shining shields; and ships of peace
Stuffed to their bursting hatches with rich bales
Of dyed cloths and of frankincense and gum.
Vainly for Ithobal bellied their sails;
Their painted flags danced vain against the sky;
Their straining rigging creaked, their dripping oars

Beat the brine into milk; his playfellows,
The barque, the billow, and the boundless marge
Pleased him no more; in Nesta's heart he slept,
A galley anchored in a land-locked bay.

Yet what the Gods ordain that thing will fall.
We sat one eve on the cool roof, and watched
The Lord of Day go glorious to his bath
In gold and purple splendours of the West;
And when I said, "I know that path he goes,
And something too I know what path he comes
From the East desert and its rivers twain;
And over black and yellow breeds of men;
But no one knows, not Bel's great self I think,
The Southward of our world. See!"—and I drew
With finger dipped in the spilled Lesbian wine
A rude map on the marble bench; "See! here
Sits Egypt; by her side the Sea of Suph,
And past that Sea is Punt, which I have viewed,
For some do come there making perilous trade;
But all beyond is nought—night, silence, death—
None knoweth or can know."

She wet with wine
A finger, and, with light laugh, featly made
A finish to my picture on the stone;

Saying "Dear honoured lord, but I do know!
It is not night, nor death, nor darkness there,
But such a land that this thy Syria
Counts but for curtilage, and Egypt's self
A melon-garden. Where thou shutt'st in Punt,
The mighty coast sweeps southward girt with sea,
And southward still and southward till you come
To mine own country." Then she murmured forth,—
Like a dove cooing never-ending notes
Of something sweet and secret in her wood
Unfolding leaf by leaf,—stories of skies
Whereunder she was born, with stars and peaks
Not known to ours; of mighty streams that sprang
From mountain bosoms, lifting changeless snows
Into the central blue, which, leaping down
By monstrous cataract and reeded reach,
Full of strange creatures that did swim and fly,
And banked by woodlands flowery, wild, and still,
Poured over thirsty sands green wealth of crops,
Feeding much people. And what seas there were,
Wide inland seas shut in the knees of hills,
Which held no salted drop and felt no tides,
Yet whereupon a well-rowed boat might pass
And spy for seven whole days no land at all.
Of marvellous tribes she babbled, pigmy-folk

Mouse-skinned and munching roots; of man-eaters
Whose horrid food were what they took in war;
Some that went stark as stones; and some that bore
Bark dyed like butterflies, or speckled skins,
Or pied, or tawny, from the forest won,
With ornament fantastic or pierced bone,
Coral and cowrie, and rude-spangled bead.
Of countless herds she spoke, white goats and black,
Kine, wild and gentle, and the long-tailed sheep,
And apes like unto men; grim things of the waste
Whose names put terror in her tender voice—
In mine ears meaningless. Also their Kings,
What savage state these kept; and of their gods,
What images were made in wood and stone,
Iron and gold and silver; for she touched
The plates of gold tied in her clustering hair
And said, "This groweth there; our daily grain
Was dressed in this." And of the birds she spake;
Wonderful birds, like flowers equipped with wings
Blazing in blue and gold and rainbow hues;
Of serpents that did drag a mottled bulk,
Thick as an ox-girth, through the crackling brake,
Full thirty cubits long. Of creatures dreamed
Only in nightmare, as I thought; sea-cows
And river-horses, and a beast that fed

With spotted muzzle mid the topmost boughs;
Huge pigs that wore horned daggers on the nose
And elephants that went like moving hills
Through the affrighted thickets; lions dire,
With estridges, their ivory eggs a-heap
For suns to hatch, and lizards fathom long,
And other brutes which walked in armoured suits
Like the mailed men of Elam. For all this
A land, she said, fair in some parts as Earth
Hath fairest; and with many a race renowned
For meekness, friendliness, and courtesy,
Mild to the stranger, piteous to the weak;
Herself the daughter of a sovereign
Puissant in arms, opulent, rich in love,
In reverence and worship from his folk,
Far, far beyond that marble edge whereto
She drew the willing wine: from whose kind throne.
Torn in her childhood by a treachery,
She had become a wanderer, and mine.

O King! if thou hast seen thy Nile pour down
At rain-break, rushing o'er his stones to the sea;
If thou hast seen on Suph the summer floods
Come home in foam and freshets to each gulf
When the great South wind roars; so did my heart,

Which is thy servant, once more burn for the beach
As this dusk teacher opened wide the doors,
And showed me where to look for that which crowns
Even thyself with glory. Since she said,—
Whenever in that journey of her lips
I stayed and questioned her, "Yea, there and there
We saw the sea; no mountain-margined pool
But Kneph's own water dreadful, shining, wide,
Rolling its billows southward, northward still,
How far our farthest coast men answer not."

What the high Gods will have falls at its hour;
For, sitting at the lattice with new eyes,
Awake from love and seeing clear again,
So that once more the ships were friends to me,
The noise of rowers' music, the sea's voice
Under those white walls full of private words;
There came, great Pharaoh! messengers from thee,
Egyptians of thy household, men of worth,
Envoys to Tyre. We heard a herald blow
His conch-shell, and the cymbals played, and one
From a papyrus spake these words aloud
In hearing of the town: "To friendly men,
To mariners of Tyre, the lord of lords,
The Pharaoh ruling over Misraim,

Sendeth goodwill and greeting. He hath need
Of sailors for a thing he hath to do,
A voyage of ships, full perilous, but full
Of guerdon in the going, and of more
In the returning, if there hap return;
Since these ships sail for harbours never seen.
Well known ye are, of Tyre and Sidon sons,
For craft upon the waters; if there be
Those that fear danger less than they hate sloth,
Those seasoned with the salt, who will take wage
And service with the Pharaoh for this work,
Let them ask service." And with this was flung
Largesse among the folk, yet no man stirred.

Outspake an ancient one, from Ascalon
"Ye men of Tyre take heed! Three winters past
Across the brook of Egypt I and some
Wended with camels, and came thither where
The east horn of the Lord of Egypt's Sea
Juts green into the Stony Land; we saw
Along the shore three crosses; on them hung
What of three men the kites and crows had left—
Dried skull, and skin, and bones. 'What wrought these ones,'
We asked, 'that they should moulder in the sun?'

And the folks said: 'These are three officers
Conspired against the peace of Pharaoh; he
Willing to spare their lives bade them take ship
And sail and sail over, past utmost bound
To fetch him secrets from the dark; but they
After ten moons of travel clapped on wing
Of homeward voyage. Reaching home they cried:—
"Better to die than bear what we have borne
Fronting the frightful perils of yon world
Which hath a death on every wave, a hell
At every cape. Kill us, but send not there."'
And Pharaoh paid their wages, slaying them."

But Nesta bent upon me those dark eyes,
Deep as the sea, and spake, "This is for thee,
Ithobal, son of Magon, lord and lover,
The Gods do bring thy heart and wish in one.
Rise and make parley with these men of Nile;
It is thy work, and I shall help thy work;
Thou art the man they seek." And while she spake
The silver dove of Ishtar fluttered in,
Perched at my elbow, cooed a dulcet note,
Then darted seaward with a singing wing
In token that the Gods would have their will.

But when they said in Tyre "Ithobal goes
In service of the Pharaoh to build ships,
Which shall at Pharaoh's charge sail the dark seas
Nether of nethermost and past the bounds
Where boldest oar hath dipped," the white town
poured
All its sea-people round me, for 'tis known
How multitudinous Tyre sits on the wave,
And what throngs, many-coloured, swarm her quays,
Doing the business of the waters. There
Were traders from the isles loud-trafficking
With such as brought by weary caravan
Fir boards and cedar out of Lebanon;
And patient shapers of the bladed oar
Bargaining for Bashan oak and ivory
To edge the rowing benches; Chittim men,
Swarthy and watchful, and the Ashurites,
And those that traded linen, white and blue
Or bordered, to make sails; sea wolves sun-tanned
From Sidon and from Arvad; mixed with these
The wise grey master-pilots of the place,
Quick to catch tidings, knowing all the seas,
But beating on their breasts at word of this;
Caulkers from Gebal, wotting well to keep
Seams tight and hulls wave-worthy; companie

Of shipmen come from Elam, Lud and Phut;
Merchants and fighting folk busy with bales,
Or cleaning shields, or pointing arrow-heads,
Or fitting spears with new-forgèd blades; those called
The Gemmadin, with sturdy cargoers
Of Tarshish, Javan, Meshech, clamorous they
To sell their slaves and vaunt their brazen ware.
Togharmah dealers drew into our throng
Lean, keen-eyed, desert-born, leading their strings
Of mules and horses; and from Dedan those
Who bring the tusks of elephant, the myrrh,
The ebony, and gum. Swart Syrians
Bartering for cloths of Tyre stained by the shell
Their emeralds, corals, agates; bearded Jews
Selling their wheat from Minnith, honey, oil,
And balm of Pannag; and Damascus-breds
Plying their business with white bleachèd wools,
And wines of Helbon: with such come from Dan
Who sold bright iron, cassia, calamus,
Cushions for chariots: tribesmen from the sands
Of Araby with lambs and rams, and shawls
Of camel-hair for tents; and Raamah sent,
And Sheba, coffers filled with subtle spice
Fine stones, turkis and sard and lazuli
And powdered gold. Haran and Canneh there

Put forth their stores of blue and 'broidered work
And chests of rich apparel, bound with cords
On scented cedar. All the noise of these,
The singing of the sailors, and the cries
Of sellers, and the stir of the Bazaar,
The dance-girls, the snake-charmers, drum-players,
The fortune-tellers, minstrels, priests that begged
Alms for the temples—all broke off and heard
All stayed and listened, and drew nigh to us
Along the water-face of Tyre that eve,
Knowing of Ithobal and how he took
Service with Pharaoh, with my lord the King.

Also at parting there was sacrifice
To those who rule the sea,—the Fish-tailed God
And the Twin Stars and the Seven Nameless Ones
But when in Ishtar's fane they brought to slay
Two boys of Africa limbed like young deer,
Soft-voiced but speaking most with wistful eyes,
Whom the grey priests that go her altar round
Would offer for the speeding of our voyage,
'Twas Lady Nesta drew the knife away
From the stretched hands and cut the bonds o
those,
Handah and Gondah, saying "Take the price

In sheep or camel for the thing ye do;
My lord and I did trace the journey's plan
With wine, not blood, and so will follow it,
Bloodless, if this may be, since pity comes
To those that pity." And behold those here
Safe and most faithful among faithful found.

END OF THE FIRST DAY.

# THE SECOND DAY

## THE SECOND DAY

*Ithobal, Magon's son, of Tyre*
*Hath comfort for his heart's desire;*
*He builds in Egypt galleys three*
*To sail unto the unknown Sea.*

MAY the King live for ever! By thy soul;
By thy magnificence and majesty;
Not less than such a treasure-house as thine,
No bounty meaner than great Pharaoh's grace,
No hand less open, and no weaker heart
Than thine, O Lord of Lords! had plenitude
For charges of this high emprize. Our Tyre
With all her pride, her merchants bold and keen,
Her ships shut off into the Midland sea,
Her sailors fearless and her pilots wise
Held no heart for the task sore tempting her.
Thy kingly wish it was, thy kingly word,
Thy largesse, broad and fertile as the Nile,
Called me to be thy captive, and bestowed
With godlike power the means to work thy will;
And bring thee, as I bring, thy biddings done.

Nigh fifty moons agone—thou knowest, Lord!
Before thy throne I kneeled in this same hall
And heard thy word, how thine Egyptians brought
Tales whispered from the stillness of the South
Of lands outside known land, and wash of seas
Beyond heard waters where, what seemed to stand
The edge of the Earth, might haply stretch afar,
Might haply keep in darkness some new light,
In silence some strange voice, in the will of the Gods
Some golden secrets held for hardihood:
And how that darkness vexed thy royal soul;
And how that silence teased thee, and the thought
Though thou were Lord of Nile and did'st command
Suph and her shores, there might be territory,
Goodly to gain, and spread of sovereignty,
And godlike deeds to do, if one knew where.
And saying, "Thus much wot we," thou didst bid
Thy scribes unroll the painted skins that shewed
The sea lines and the land lines where they stayed.
Then I, who had sailed boldest of my time,
Marked, at thy mandate, to what spot I went
Farthest of far. And when thou saidst to me
"What is yet farther, and how might we reach
To tear the truth from Kneph?" humbly I gave
Reply and spake: "Kneph and the mighty Gods

Alone know this: yet if a King should grant
Gold and the gifts to build three stalwart ships
Here on thy sea; and freight them full of gear;
And fit them in such wise to mock at storms;
And man them with picked companies enured
To close obedience and contempt of fate,
With rowers seasoned to the labouring oar,
And watchful timoneers, and men-at-arms
Chosen for bravest; I, tried sailor here,
Ithobal, son of Magon, at his word
Would from the silent gods their secret pluck
Or leave my life where I did lose his ships."

Then, mighty Pharaoh! thou didst answer me,
"Build me those ships on these my waters here;
Build at what cost thou wilt to make them stout,
As if the beams were of red gold, and decks
Of planished silver. Stuff them with such gear
As largest forethought asks. Fill them with store
Of all thy longest travel could demand.
Hire me from Tyre or Sidon, whence thou wilt,
Picked mariners and skilful timoneers
And valiant men-at-arms who know thy flag,
And will not dread to follow where it flies.
Thou art of Pharaoh's service, Ithobal,

From this day's noon; and ye, chief councillors,
Put a red robe of honour on this man;
Give him a guard; and wearing this my ring,
Command my overseers, treasurers,
Store-keepers, officers, artificers,
To grant all asked, of timbers, leathers, brass,
Victuals, and viands, honey, grain and oil,
Fulfilling what he will." So spakest thou,
Most royal master, lordliest of all lords!

Thus did I build and build. A windless creek
Turns hither from the western horn of Suph—
Which hath two horns upon the northern end
Of thy Red Water—turns to 'Ataka.
Broad yellow sands athwart the green waves look
To Moosa's Fountain, and grey mountains piled,
Peaks which take morning first, and rosy crags
That see the last of sunset over Cush.
There did we choose a spot with easy slope
To the dimpled inlet, and good underground
To take the cradles, while to that same place,
Moon after moon, thy bounty brought to me
Food for the toil; acacia wood, palm logs,
Sont, and, for stubborn knee-pieces and bends,
Grey iron-bark; also from Lebanon

By raft or caravan fair cedar planks,
Trimmed to fine edge, and pine-tree poles to make
Masts, and for benches lengths of sycamore,
With oak and ash for oars, and iron clamps
To knit the joints, and nails of bronze to bind
Timber to timber. And with these things came
Mechanics out of Tarshish, Sidon, Tyre,
Cunning to wield the mallet and the adze;
Carpenters, skilled to dovetail to a hair;
Smiths, who knew well with hammer and with tongs
To bend the brass taking their will like wax.
These came with sawyers, caulkers, sailmakers,
And those deep-crafty the green hides to twist
In cord and cable; or from hair and flax
Halyard and brace to braid; chiefs of the band,
The master-builders with their compasses
And reed-pens marking measurements, most shrewd
To note if any faulty baulk or knot
Creep with the sound stuff midst our goodly gear
And at some pinch bewray us. Succoured thus,
Well did our building fare by edge of sea.

Three ships we planned to build,—biremes,—to bulk
Large for our stores and sailors; not too large
To take the shore at need and deftly pass

Inside the reefs, by narrow channel ways,
When seas were angry. Ships that in the calm
Might lightly wend with measured stress of oars,
Or, if fair winds did blow, sea-worthy spread
Their painted wings. The first, of my command,
Should be The Silver Dove; in length t'was schemed
Sixty-five cubits, and in beam eleven;
Row-seats, of under deck fifteen a-side
Of upper row-seats, to the right and left,
Two-score. Forward and afterward, strong built,
Cabins enclosed; and round her sides a run
Of gallery, where mariners should work
Nor foul the oarsmen. In the foremost part,
A mast of pine with laddered shrouds, well-stayed
And knitted linen sails, wide for light airs,
Scanty for blustering breezes; oar-ports carved
For seventy blades. Under the Thalamites,—
The lower rowers,—goodly space should stretch
Where stores would lie, and waste sea-water drain,
And the fair ship at need take ballast in.
Light must she be for hauling; strong for shocks,
Ample to house her company: this ship
Was mine and Lady Nesta's with the best
Gathered about us for the enterprise:

No slave band straining sullen at the looms,
But free men of the sea, good at the oar,
Good at the tackle, good at need with spear
Or sling or bow: tried mariners whereof
Hanno the Carchedonian, under me,
Had mastership; comrade in bygone days.
Built like to this, but of bulk scantier,
Was Ram of Kneph with fifty rowing men,
Hiram of Tyre her captain: joined with him
My sister's son, Hamilcar. Last and third,
The Black Whale whereupon Nimroud did rule
With Sothës the Egyptian. She should bear
Forty stout oars and be provision craft,
Close stuffed with goods and gear and merchandise.

These did we fashion as a man doth frame
That which life hangs on and the ends of life,
Not matching board nor morticing a beam
Save, mighty King, as if the eye of Thoth
Noted our labouring, to spare or slay
As each one's duty went into the work.
We laid false keels dressed out of stubborn stuff,
From stem to stem, to take the slippery sand,
The grinding shelf: bolted and fanged them home
Into the solid keels; and over those,

The kelsons moulded into one with them:
Atop of all false kelsons, where the feet
Of the masts stood fast. Across them and across
Bolted the sister-beams; built up the ribs;
Worked in the elbow-pieces and the knees;
Braced them with tough ties; wedged the transom-
ends;
Drove home the deck supports; and covered in
The hollow wombs of these with bedded planks,
Doubled below; and every seam and joint
Nicely with pitch sealed in and palm fibres.
In all their sides we cut the ports for oars
Rimmed and well rounded; and to every port
The leathern sleeve true fixed, lest the rude sea
Break through upon the rowers.

When 'twas wrought,
And the three goodly ships lay trim and strong,—
Sea-things that took a life from shape and sheen,
And seemed like Ocean's children, keen to dip
Their breasts in the flood,—we stepped the masts
in each;
Set up the standing tackle; hoisted yards;
Fitted abaft the two great oars that steer;
Bedecked each hull in colours glad and gay,

Reddening the prows and painting bold and bright
Each vessel's eyes, where the wide binding boards
Drew fine into the stem, fair-finishing
With each craft's emblem; mine a silver dove,
Ishtar's bright sign—to keep the Goddess ours—
And on The Ram of Kneph, the Lord of waves,
Figured in brass and ivory, for guide
Of Hanno's crew. But Hiram had for his
A great whale spouting, carved in ebony.
We launched them light, not straining the new hulls
Till seams should tighten, soaked; and all defaults
Show plain. But like sea-nymphs born for the brine,
Comely, defectless on the flood they sate.

Next, ship by ship, we laded, tier on tier
Stowing our merchandise; the cloth, the beads,
The wares wild people love, spare goods and gear,
And over these in tall red jars the grain;
Flour for the ship-cakes, honey, oil, pulse, meal,
Dried fish, and rice, and salted goods. Nor wine
Was lacking; seasoning herbs and kitchen stuff;
Nor camel-cheese, nor dates. The water-pots
At each port we should fill. Phoenician hands
Well knew to pack a hold, wasting small space.
All lay in order; each man had his niche.

Afterwards in full council I unfold
How we shall voyage. This near sea is known:
Ishtar's bright bird on prow of Ithobal
Safely will wing her way from point to point,
From reef to reef, on western shore of Suph;
From Klysma to Greek Harbour; by Kosseir;
Under the emerald mount and 'Ataka;
Down past Aidhab, and where the hills of Kus
Shut off the sinking sun, till we attain,
Four hundred leagues from this, past many isles,
An island green and grey. The black rocks jag
Its lonely steeps; on this side and on that
The sea frets in a narrow passaging,
All day and night making its moan; for there
Is "Gate of Lamentation," whence we pass,
By this hand or by that, out from those seas
That bear a name. Thus far 'tis training time;
We and our vessels will become acquaint.
And thus far shall these three, The Silver Dove,
The Ram and Whale securely wend; by day,
If North wind favours, spreading square sails wide
If no wind blows over the poop, with oars;
By night reposing, when the sea rolls strong,
On shore well chosen; if the sea be still,
At anchor; save if Ishtar's kindly moon

Shine and 'tis good to make a night a day,
Lessening the leagues, and leagues and leagues to
come.

Moreover for the slow the swift must wait,
Or by clear signals lead to meeting-place;
Best safety will still lie in fellowship.
We set for each the watches; such an hour
For toil, and such for food; at such an hour
Due worship to the gods; and then at such
To cleanse each ship, and broken gear refit,
And bale the holds, and grease the rowing-ports.
Also, by signs made, when to take the land,
And how to beach, and how to set a guard;
And who should search the fountains out, and fill
The water-pots; and who make friendly parle
With native people, opening markets so;
And what was good to buy and just to give.

Twas common lore of mariners how Suph
Sleeps in a tideless bed, nor feels that moon
Which at her full draws the wide waters up,
And at her dark half-drops them. Thy Red Sea,
Great Pharaoh! belting in all Misraim here,
By no streams fed, bordered by burning sands

Or sun-baked mountains, sucks the ocean in
To give it forth again in mist and dew:
So, if one lay his ship upon a beach,
No certain flood will come to lift her off,
As otherwhere: but if the wind blow strong
This way or that a current runs will raise
The waters to two cubits or to three.
Well-nigh through all the year a North-West creams
The blue with silver; it shall fill our sails
Dawn after dawn till at the ninth moon's end—
Two moons from setting forth—we reach that isle
Baulking the Southern breeze, would hold us back;
Albeit as ye pass outside, by then,
The season mellows and the soft monsoon—
Prayed for of Arab sailors—breathing mild
Out of the white North-West, shall waft us on
Whither I know not, nor its winds nor tides.

Followed brave days; the North wind filled our sails.
The green sea glittered under 'Ataka,
Then, deepening, changed to blue, and sparkled bright
In spume and long-laced breaker, where reef edge
Breasted its roll. A good day's travel done—
Sufficeth if we finish fifteen leagues
With sheet and blade—at dark we find some nook

Of favouring shoal or friendly promontory,
Where my three ships could sleep safe moored, or rest
Aground. Then some on shore-lit cooking fires;
And some spread nets to catch the finny food;
And some adventured into thickets near
For fuel, or what game might be afoot,
Or fruits and gums and herbs. Glad they did stretch
Limbs cramped from shipboard on the dry clean sand,
Or chase with bow in hand the shy gazelle;
Or barter with the wild-eyed villagers;
To some all strange, but not to Nesta here,
My Lady of the Land, who knew its face—
As daughter knows the mother's eyes and lips—
And knew its flowers and trees, and why they grew,
And which were good and evil. Nay, one eve
This spacious deed had in beginning died
But for my lady. On the beach we paced,
The sun being just gone down, and heedlessly
I set my sandal on some mouldering bark:
Forth from the crackle slipped a hooded asp
Which stung and stung again. I mocked at the worm:
But Nesta, sweet orbs wide—lips drawn—teeth set—
Clutched me and cried, "Thou hast three hours to live,

Dear lord, except I find the serpent-root
In some near brake." Then, stooping first, she sucked
Those two small wounds, and spitting on the sand,
Ran to the thicket; presently returned,
Some plant in hand which had a whitish leaf,
With prickles, and the blossom like a snake;
Of this she chews and chews, binds leaf and root
Over the limb; then from her bosom draws
Some sacred thing curiously wrought in gold,
Which helped her at her prayers, and clasping that,
Pillowed my hot brows on her gentle knees.
I had much thirst; meseems I nearly swooned,
But woke unharmed with Nesta watching near.
But, "Master dear!" she said, "'twas an ill worm!
Nought could have saved thee if my leaf saved not
And Nesta's faithful lips; oh! an ill worm!"

In midst of Suph ere yet the season breaks,
Between the winds a belt of calm will stretch
Under that burning arch of day, those nights
Spangled with stars. There idle hangs the sail,
Dead drops the useless pennon at mast-head;
From the deck-seams oozes the pitch, the planks
Burn the bared foot; the sea smokes in the sun,
And in its hot and oily glass there swim

Strange shapes that love the warm brine and the calm :
Water snakes, green and gold, or ringed, or pied,
Or mottled, like a pard, yellow and black ;
Some with sharp muzzle, some with foul flat heads
And fiendish eyes ; then monstrous sea-jellies,
Purple, and russet, silvery grey and pink,
With filmy oars and mouths which ope and close,
Pant their slow passage through the salt. Soon comes
Amidst them, as a ship through bladder-wrack,
The great grey robber-shark, his black fin hoist,
Like pirate's sail, and slimy belly of pearl ;
A spear-blade gleaming as it cuts the blue.
The little fishes fly, save one bold sort
Striped motley, with long snout, which is the slave
And lick-plate of the shark, seeking for him
Food, that the little fish may leavings eat ;
No shark so hungry that will swallow him.
Along the heaving hyaline there lie
Ropes of thick sea-grass, yellow, black, and red,
Torn by the teeth of storms from ledge awash
Along the coast ; if we shall nearly look,
A thousand myriad little mariners
Die on that drifting wreck, small shell-fishes
Who made their tiny houses beautiful ;

Strange creatures, like sea blossoms having lips
On every leaf, that built upon the rock,
And, like poor mortals, thought their world would last;
Now drive they outcast with their broken house.
Oft spake we, she and I, of this strange strife
By the high Gods decreed 'twixt life and death,
Where living to be slain we slay to live,
And all which Isis gives Amenti takes.
By the Seven Nameless Ones! she said a word
Wise to my mind, one morning, while we rowed
Nigh "The Two Brothers" in the belt of calm.
Beneath that windless morning on the waves
A flock of sea-fowl seated wide and far
Made the sea white; for leagues and leagues they rocked[1]
On the smooth sob o' the deep, screaming for joy
Of living and the lust of prey. I spake:—
"See yonder gluttons of the wing and beak!
How glad and fair, yet are they murderers
Who spy huge shoals of homely guiltless fish
Hastening to spawn, and circumvent them here,
And swallow at a gulp mother and seed,
Father and milt; for one day of bird life
Destroying thirty myriad lives of fish!

Shall this be justice here? hath Thoth known all?
God Melcar, and Queen Ishtar and Great Bel?"
But reverently she fetched her fetish forth
And laid it to her lips, and murmured, "Lord!
To see the ways of Gods await new eyes."

Then fell the rain storms: where the sister winds
From North and South bring their black cloud-
wracks up,
These meet and break their sullen swollen wombs
With thunder and with lightning. O'er the sea
Wasted sweet water pelts, beats down the crests
Of billows that would rise, makes dry rocks ring
With patter of the cataracts, and paints
The barren valleys green. But we, aware
Of tempests in the middle waters, hug
The friendly shore, skirting with shallow keels
And cunning stress of oars, where the gaps come,
From cape to cape. One night, in the ninth moon,
The Ram, making for beach—the sea being full—
Took ground on lip of ledge, and shore away
Her hither bilge-piece. When the dawn did break
She hangs there, perilous. We lighten her;
We take off what we may of store and gear;
Fling overboard what might be spared; with pole

And rope put strain to free her, for she grinds
But by the counter: yet all's nought! the tide
Swells near its topmost: then doth Hiram take
His stoutest cable shoreward, kept a-dry,
Braces it twainfold three palm stems around;
Strains the great cord to breaking; yet all's nought!
Till, at the nick, when most the tide wave lifts,
And most the Ram doth tremble, Hiram cries,
"Water unto the cord!" Young Hamilcar
Drenches the hawser; the wet fibres knit
Closer by half a span; the cable cracks,
But the good ship swings free and comes to peace
On quiet sands.

Now must we find afield
Timber to mend Kneph's barque. Yet here grow not
The forest trees would fit our purposes;
Sont only, and the Doun, and stunted thorns.
Nathless, over the plain at foot of hills
That to a highland climb by terraces,
A belt of woodland darkens, green and long,
Whereto with spears and axes and a band
Of willing men we make a march. I go
With Lady Nesta and the Egyptian slaves,

Handah and Gondah. Since that day the knife
Was taken from their necks at Nesta's word,
These had been steadfast to her service, guards
Watching her steps and shadowing all her walks.
An open rolling plain it was that sloped
By rock and sand-hill and a world of thorns
To uplands with mimosa groves and mounds
By the wise ants built; oh! a lonely land,
Save for the ring-doves and some speckled hens
Which ran and cackled in the brake, and herds
Of silk-skinned antelopes. There, mighty King,
First did I view that creature of the waste
Which hath two horns upon his snout, and tail
Swine-like, and armoured plates like Gammadim,
Eyes of the pig, and body of the steer;
Surely in sport the high Gods fashioned it.
For, as we bore our beam forth from the wood,
The wild thing burst upon us, scattering all,
And Nesta said "*Incomba*, Master, heed!
This is the white horned beast of Africa
Which is to dread: stand still until he charge,
But when he sinks his muzzle to the ground,
Step swiftly right or left, he will not see."
But while it came upon us Gondah's spear
Ham-strung the beast and when it wallowed prone,

The blade of Handah found its heart and slew
So were we quit, and good meat made that foe,
Carved in long strips and slow-dried in the sun.
Then patched we Hiram's vessel where the ledge
Tore her bilge bare. It was a seasoned balk
Shred by the lightning from a forest-king,
Untouched by worm, mended my stout Ram's sid
So speed we thence with south-wind, gusts, and rai
And then, anew, calm seas whereon my crews
By this stage fitly trained, would emulate,
One flag against the other, ship with ship
Racing for joy of manhood and free waves.
With three-score blades and ten The Silver Dove
Held easy mastership. The Ram and Whale
More equal courses ran and good to view
On such gay days the oars play to the tunes
Of flute and drum-skin sounded from bench-foot—
Zeugite and Thalamite—above, below,
Keeping one pulse and cutting clean the blue
To toss it, creamy foam and bubbles back
Along the whitened pathway of each keel,
Where in our wakes the glistening dolphins danced
Thus southward, southward came we, sometimes hel
Captive in bay or inlet by ill winds;
Sometimes much threatened of the coast people.

But we were strong and watchful; if ashore
We pitched a camp, the place was circled in
With thorny boughs and tree-roots and a fosse.
All down unto the isle, of mariners
Two only had we lost; some beast by night
Dragged one asleep into the dark; and one
Died of a calenture: that which is writ
Is writ within the book of each man's life.

In the tenth moon we sailed out of that sea:
There the great ocean opened; East and South
The unknown world which, Pharaoh! now is thine
By lordly primal right. East and to North
I myself wotted of a port secure
Into bare calcined hills gave entrance good,—
Shamshan they name the mountain—and the town
Which, in a cup of burnt-out fire-mount, sleeps
Attanoe.* From the isle one day and night
With steadfast oars and favouring breath of breeze
Moored thy ships, Majesty of Egypt! safe.
It is a friendly people; from their wells
Hewn in the rock, we filled sweet water up;
Bought palm fruit and great cream-white Estridge-

* Aden.

For three men sharp-set one doth make a meal—
With millet-flour and oil of olive trees;
But mainly water; for my purpose held—
Unspoken save to Nesta and the chiefs—
Bold to put forth into that eastward blue
Which had no shore I knew, nor place of rest,
Nor help for thirst, nor food for emptiness,
Nor shield from storm and death, till we should pass
Full seven-score leagues of naked waves, and view
A great cliff rise out of that nameless sea—
So said the coast folk—and they called that cliff
East Horn of the Large Land where none hath come.

END OF THE SECOND DAY

# THE THIRD DAY

## THE THIRD DAY

*Ithobal, pushing o'er the main,*
*Reacheth a shore with stress and pain;*
*Strange men and birds and beasts hath seen,*
*And winneth where no man had been.*

GLORY, and life, and grace from the high Gods
Unto Great Pharaoh! From the Arabian Shore
At end of the ninth moon we pushed to sea:
The Ram, The Black Whale, and The Silver Dove
Thy ships, a goodly triplet rigged afresh,
Well filled and fitted; for my purpose held
To trust the deep and to be done with land,
Till on the gulf's far coast—if coast there be,
As the sea people think—we touch a cape
East of the mainland, if mainland there hap.
So had I charged the water-pots and crammed
Our jars with meal and feasted full my crews,
To hearten up their manhood; yet none knew
Except the captains and my lady here
How to the winds and waves we gave our soul

What trackless seas we clove quitting that port
With merry plash of oars, and steering straight
Where none did steer before. At setting forth
Nesta bade bring aboard of merchandise --
Or so I deemed—a score of bales, and laid
The goods—I thought for barter—in the poop,
Where her sea-chamber stood. The sky was blue,
The sun beamed glad, the silver-broidered waves
Lisped pleasant music, and there breathed a wind,—
Spiced with the myrrh and aloes of the hills,—
Which tripped our swiftest blades and drove our beaks
Deep in the dancing green. But when it fell,
And right abaft us in the lonely gulf
The sun dipped, all aflame with gold and pearl,
Burning the brine, the lusty rowers changed
Tired arms for fresh, and all that still night through,
And all next dawn to noon, and after noon,
Until again the sun gilded the west,
Watches, by watches, they did toil. But Kneph
Had missed a sacrifice, or Ishtar's lamp
Gone rashly scant of oil; for while 'twas dark,
At breaking of fourth day the morning star
Went out behind black clouds, and a foul win
Drove leaping seas into our rowing ports,

And drenched each deck-bench. Valorously the

And drum kept measure; valorously the oars
Swung to the rowing song from ship to ship;
Yet how shall mortal strength resist the might
Of the angry Gods? All that long, heavy day
We did not win a ship's length, and the next
Hardly three leagues. Afterwards fell a calm;
A brazen sky arched o'er a seething sea;
A blaze of Dawn and Noon and Afternoon
Parching my patient comrades. By the blood
Of Thammuz! all my drinking water spent,
My men a-dry and that shore still not near,
Meseemed that we were lost in the outsetting.

Came the ninth day whereat a hard wind blew
Foul from the Eastward weakening what we did,—
Too weak already. Nimroud drew his ship
Abreast of mine; the oars clashed and our sides
Rasped with the swell. The Syrian captain sprang
Insolent on my deck—an angry band
Of bearded faces round him. Heretofore
Thrice had I chided him for hests forgot
And deeds undisciplined. Rebellion burned
Desperate in his eyes: "Thou Magon's son

Hast brought us here to perish; one day's drink
Remaineth, and thy fabled shore comes not.
Send my poor rowers water; if thou wilt,
Steer thyself onward to thy realm of dreams,
But give us of thy store and suffer us
To go back westward with the favouring wind;
Port may be reached, and those thou slayest saved."

Thirsty and lean my oarsmen gazed on him,
Half pleased to hear, half glad to disobey.
One little spark may breed a mighty fire;
Their hearts were dry for flame. Shall this be end
Of Pharaoh's hope? I mused; shall my Lord's will
Wreck on one coward's raving? From his hand
I wrested Nimroud's spear, drove its broad blade
Deep in the traitor's breast; stone-dead he fell
Amid the oar-looms on the reddened deck;
And all the ship-folk and the rowers glared,
And the sea idly played, tangling our oars.
Then cried I, "Fling yon carrion overboard;
He dies who disobeys; to your benches, men

Yet in my secret heart sorrow kept seat.
How make the land with dying mariners?
Had Nimroud reason? was it well to yield?

Then, at my worst, did Lady Nesta lay
Her hand on mine, and with the other point
Southward of east where from the mingling lines
Of sea and sky there rose a ruddy speck
Touched by the morning, like the golden grain
Upon a lotus leaf. She murmured "Land!
There is thy shore—and mine!" A mighty joy
Flooded this heart. "Thou daughter of the Sun,
May the Seven Nameless Ones yield thee for this!
That is my shore—and thine; yet if we row,
These cannot follow since their jars are dry;
In sight of prize we perish." "Nay! dear lord,"
Quoth Lady Nesta, "give to Ram and Whale
What drink we have, and bid them follow up,
While I do break for Ishtar's ship these bales
Laid in my cabin; twenty bales of fruit
New to thine eyes. An unseen fruit it grows
In the Arab vales; 'tis the gold apple, kept
By dragons, people tell, in guarded groves;
I knew and bought. I did foresee this strait.
I feared to fail—perchance at winning-point.
Dread not! Give them the water, and to ours
These juicy globes distribute; bid them eat,
Then stoutly man their oars, for the wind drops
And 'tis from westward now the current sweeps

By night we will be underneath yon hill.
And fill the water jars."

Yea! so it fell;
The Silver Dove gave to the thirsty ones
What drink she had; the luscious fruit was sucked,
Brightening all faces, strengthening all throats
So that my seventy sang in frolic time
To music of the flute-player and the drum;
And, by the night, look! we had touched a beach
So sheltered that the sea did kiss it smooth
With tender ripples, and a stream came down
Out of a hanging wood; whence we did drink
And drink, and drink, and thank the Gods for life.

We beached below the Cape; * a mighty rock
Wheat-coloured, hath a sanded bay at foot,
In shore a sandy hill; its height I deem
Five hundred cubits; riseth from the sea
Wall-like with sloping cap. Coasting along
We skirt a yellow shore; mimosa trees
Marked where a stream stole out; then, past the sands,
Dark broken rocks, and one brown cliff that sets

* Cape Guardafui.

His foot i' the waves and lifts his brow to clouds,
Shenârif, so the fisher-people said.
Afterwards long low beaches, backed with bush;
Next that, an inland range wherefrom juts forth
A crag over the breakers. Farther on
Fresh flats of sand, and pools behind the sand
Noisy with sea-fowl; birds that swim and wade,
Long-legged and long-beaked birds, storks, pelicans,
Rose-plumed flamingoes, bitterns, cormorants,
Tribes of the web and wing. To landward end
A stream flows down, for sake of which the folk
Had built their huts and many gardens round,
Whom first we frighted. Never yet to them
Had come such strangers nor been viewed before
Garments of Egypt, or the Tyrian coats,
Or vessels many-legged like water-flies.
Dark hued they were, naked, or basely clad
With belt or plaited leaves, or bark of tree,
Their hair all shagged, dyed red. Not Nesta knew
Not Handah and not Gondah what these cried
Answering our words when we did woo them back
From flight to make a marketing. Yet mild,
Peaceful of mien, dwelling in houses small
But trim and comely. So—in need of food—
At bidding of my lady, no men touched

Ripe dates or millet hoarded, but we laid
For each ship's want a motley barter down—
Cloth, and bright beads, and brass and iron blades—
Wares which they crave; by every heap was placed
A stake wherefrom there swung the thing we lacked
A fruit, some grain, meat, or a butter pot.
This done in their full sight: then would we leave
The barter heaps a-row and stand aloof
Whilst our barbarians, returning soon
Meted the stuff, and laid by every pile
The goods which they would give in equal worth.
Then they withdrew, and ours, gone up again
Accepting what was fair bore that away;
What seemed not equal we did leave untouched,
They adding more and more to make all just
Till both were pleased and both went full away:
The silent market ended.

Coasting on,
In three days from the cape we reach Hafûn,
The "Wave-surrounded." 'Tis a neck of land
Four leagues along and two full leagues athwar
Broken with hillocks, edged by beaches flat,
And to the mainland tied by slender thread
Of silvery dunes. This doth good shelter give

Or here or there whichever wind do blow
To fisher-folk who—for the fish abound—
Drag their rude shallops to this side or that.
Myself, because the north-east wind blew strong
Bade Sothës, Hanno, and wise Hiram row
Round the long neck to where a little bay
Lent certain peace. There did we cast our nets
And took much finny food, but the great sharks
Would ofttimes break our gear: the negro boys,
Handah and Gondah, taught our Tyrians
To slice their fins and dry them in the sun
For broths, since out of evil cometh good.

"Where goes my lord?" the friendly people asked;
And I, "We go as far as the sun goes:
As far as the sea rolls; as far as stars
Shine still in sky, though they be unknown stars."
Then they, "What seeks my lord?" I gave reply,
"To find for mighty Pharaoh what his world
Holds hidden." But they did not know thy name
Great King! and softly laughed, and said "Who hunts
What the Gods hide hath trouble for his pay.
Many have gone thy way, and some came back,
But lean, and grey, and broken; and they told

Of savage men, and dreadful suns, and wastes
Where snake and lizard die o' the scorch, and where
The shadow of a man at high noon falls
Between his feet unseen. And if there lay
Some pool under a rock, if some stream flowed
With welcome water, all the beasts around
Sniffed it, and stamped it foul, and sucked it dry;
While lions prowled and roared." "Nay but we go,"
I answered, "'tis commanded." Then they spake
Pointing black fingers west of south, "Go then!
But keep thy ships aloof from Mabbar there—
We name it 'Stand-off Point'—lest a storm break
And trap thy vessels in the stony bay."

But Ishtar favoured, and thy Gods, O King
Soft o'er the wooded neck a morning wind
Bellied our sails; a cloudless sun arose
Turning to gold the Dove upon my stem;
To gold the milk of the waves, to gold the foam
Flung from our oars, which—bank by bank—made play
As those three keels raced gaily. At moon-rise
We saw the pale surf fretting round the head

Thrusting and thundering into cave and cleft
With echoing moans, and hiss of shingle dragged·
By Isis! 'twas a place to break a ship
With a ship's company! But we sailed wide,
Holding the friendly breeze, and all that night
And all next day—day of the eleventh moon—
Merrily sped the Dove, and Ram, and Whale;
My lusty oarsmen drowsing in the sun;
The drum and flute at peace or striking up
For frolic dance. In the warm air was taste
Of life, and joy, and hope, grown breathable.
Then did I know, dread King!—my painted sails
So filled, my lady's hair blown for a sign
Straight onward, and the faces of my men
Set to the look of such as fear no more—
Then knew I that we should not fail. The barks
Danced till the sun set down a rugged shore
Where ran a wall of rock, till with last gleam
We spy a red cliff; on this hand and that
A saffron-tinted pinnacle; behind
A darkish round-capped hill. From forth a gorge
A river rills to sea; about its mouth
Huts cluster of the shore folk. After parle
By sign and broken speech, we make fair friends,
Let fall the sails, and beach.

In the dry time,
This stream, the people said, scanted and thin,
Hath hardly flood enough to brim its bar;
But now we filled our jars at the sea's edge.
Around my ships, under a grove of palms,
A fence was fixed, by forty spearmen kept;
But we had peace. Soon, from the mountain gorge,
A caravan appears of inland folk:
Swart merchants clad in bark, rude fighting bands,
With shields of hide, and knives, and knotted clubs;
Slaves with the yoke-wood on their necks, and trains
Of laden oxen, camels, horses, eke,
A breed not seen before; marvellous steeds
Striped as a melon is, all black and white:
Flanks, muzzles, necks, and hams, pencilled and pied
Like a silk cloth of Saïs; these they said
Ran wild behind the hills, but being broke
Made gentle drudges. Goes a road, they told,
Into the land, whereby these traffickers
Wend and return, bringing their country stuff,
And taking back what wares the coast affords.
An easy path, they said, by Nogal vale,
Well watered and the forests dark and cool,

Whence we might pass, if we did will to pass
To certain goodly game-lands in the hills
Where, for the hunting, meat in plenty roved.

So—lacking meat—with twenty chosen men
And porters of the village; Hamilcar
And I, with Nesta, kept the company
Of the home-going merchants. First a cleft
Where the pent river fretted in its rocks
Glittering to light 'mid dripping ferns and fronds,
And diving into darkness where the path
O'erhung its bed. So marched we half a day
While the stream sang cool music in our ears;
And then beyond the pass a wood; great trees—
Their boles, O Pharaoh! bigger than the shafts
Which front thy palace,—and with buttressed roots
Grew over dark green solitudes, and raised
A leafy roof that noon's sun might not pierce.
No undergrowth, no grass, no blooms,—for those
We saw the butterflies:—by Isis! lord!
Thou had'st not missed the flag-flower, or the lote,
The blood-red granate-bud or palm blossom
Nor all thine Egypt's gardens, viewing there
What burning brilliance danced on double wings
From stem to stem, or lighted on the leaves

Blotting the grey and brown with lovely blaze
Of crimsons, silver-spotted, summer blues,
By gold fringe bordered, and gemmed ornament
Alight with living lustre. One, all pale,
The colour of the sunrise when pearl clouds
Take their first flush; one, as if lazulite
Were cut to filmy blue and gold; and one,
Black with gold bosses; and a purple one,
Wings broad as is my palm with silvery moons
And script of what the Gods meant when they made
This delicate work, flitting across the shade,
This breath a burning jewel, at the next
With closed vans seeming like the faded twig
It perched on, or the dry brown mossy bark.
"See!" Nesta cried, "he hath a side for love,
And life, and joy; for foes another side,
Lest they who hate him slay him: Master dear!
It is the law; life is a brittle loan,
Who makes good usance of it doeth well,
But without craft and wit this cometh not."

Round the great trunks, with deadly strict embrace,
Caressing them to death like strumpets fair
Who kiss to kill, the long llianas climbed—
The giant creepers—snakes among the plants,

Winding and winding till they come to crown,
Then spread their lightsome leaves and poisonous fruit
Bold in the sunshine. There four-handed folk,
Monkey, and ape, and marmoset, long-tailed,
Fur-bonneted, black-maned, with mocking eyes
And old men's faces, chatter, scream, and crack
The painted bush-rat's nuts, or filch from bees
Their hoarded honey. Here some serpent-vine
Hath choked its tree; the strangled trunk is down
Mouldering to dust, and the wise elephant,
Pacing the wood as though a black mount moved,
With ponderous tread, breaks the proud ruin up
And is not 'ware. There from some lower limb,
In the green twilight, hangs the giant worm,
Monstrous and mottled, with a bloomy sheen
On chilly gold and purples gleaming, tail
Knotted upon the branch, the lithe, small head,
With devilish eyes, and black, forked, slimy tongue
Swings like an innocent spray till there shall pass
With dainty hoof the unwitting antelope—
And then—hell gapes!—the swift coils cling and crush:
'Tis forest murder, as the Gods ordained.
"See!" murmured Nesta, "here was one whose foot

So swiftly sped that ere the dust of it
Had time to settle she was out of sight.
And here is one, the python, huge and still,
Drags sleepy coils on the slow-measured earth;
And yet the swift is slain, the sluggard feeds,
Because 'twas so decreed, and the law stands,
That lives, by lives, pass unto other lives."

After the forest came an upland. Here
The trees thinned out, the river spreads its bed,
By waving reeds and watergrass in flower
On each bank margined. Yet another day
Through thorny bush, high grass and aloe-spears
Our march led, till a path turning to hills
Bent southward. Then we quit our caravan,
And come, by climbing, to a table-land
Spreads wide and wide, with thorn trees scattered
thick
Far as the eye could see. All silently
We thread a thicket; at its verge, our guide
Bids gaze; and lo! Great King! such sight to view
As did amaze my Tyrians and me.
Gracious the scene was: Syrian hills are fair
With golden crocus and the rose-laurel
And scarlet lilies every silver stream

Enamelling; and goodly Egypt shews
With palms, and temples, and its waving grain.
But here a great park spread so bounteous
For grass and grove, for rock and rippled stream,
For shade and sunshine, for its swards and sands
And far off bordering of dim blue hills,
It seemed to be a garden of the Gods,
Where we had pushed unwelcome. For that plain
Was peopled, Pharaoh! not like Sais here
Nor thy royal towns—with thronging citizens
Nor built upon with walls nor set with streets;
Rather a populous city of the wild;
A sylvan capital inhabited
By creatures of the fur and hoof. In troops,
In herds, in hosts, they pastured on the green,
Scoured o'er the flying sand, ran merry rings
For sport, or joy of life, or amorous play:
A thousand myriad beasts! beasts of all breeds
That mead and forest rear. Some may men see
Even by Nile, and some were never seen
Till so we broke into their pleasaunces.
Only the Lady Nesta knew their names:
Antelopes, pied and spotted; antelopes
Like great white bulls and cows; black antelopes
Horned as with spears; and one, purple with cream,

Having striped shanks, dropped flanks, and ass's tail
And four soft horns;* striped horses, beasts which
bore
Bull-necks and limbs of deer; great armoured pigs
With horny snouts; and long-necked estridges
Flapping black wings. But most of all, I marked
That mighty wondrous brute, theretofore seen
Only in hieroglyphs at Ombos, tall
As thrice my stature, dappled like a pard,
Yellow on white, with long, wide, shambling legs
Hoof, tufted tail, sloped withers, stretching neck
Four cubits long, having flesh-horns on head,
And limpid eyes. The gentle monster grazed
In tree tops, with a dainty lip and tongue
Culling gold balls from the mimosa bough.
I would have spared, but those with Hamilcar
Slew it, and stripped the hide, and lay it here
To be thy carpet. Other beasts roamed there
Countless and curious; shaggy lions, lords
Of field and forest, held, in solitude,
Their savage court apart. Grave elephants
Swung past in stately files; grey river-hogs
Grunted for roots: the painted leopard laid
The roses of his golden coat at rest.

* The okapi of Sir H. H. Johnston.

On the forked branch. 'Twas like another world
Whereto men come not and the beasts are kings.

Yet we lacked meat, and soon with spear and bow
From those fleet foresters our hunters drew
Tax for the ships. But that same day thy slave
Had perished, ere his purpose could be won,
Save for my lady and the guardian Gods.
While we did follow on the trail of game,
At entry of a thicket, Nesta cried:
"'Ware, O my Life! I see a sign of fear:
A spotted wolf has crossed us to the left,
And twice the eagle-owl doth warn me back.
This path is dangerous—ah! have a care."
But I, hot with the chase, went heedless on
Sighting my quarry and, with shaft on string,
Was striding fast when, following faithfully—
Her light foot never weary, knowing well
All woodland marks—Nesta did seize my gown,
And whispered, "Master, look! notest thou not
Yon grass across our path hath not its hue
Of native green? Why grows it here and bent?
Why lies it shaped and smooth? I pray thee fling
This great stone at the place." Why I obeyed

Hardly I know, but hurled the fragment there,
And where it struck the false earth opened wide,
The lying swards sank down; gaped a big pit,
Black, deep, and steep, dug in the hunting path,
Set thick with sharpened stakes—the wood-folks' way
To snare their food;—so did thy servant 'scape.

Next pushing from the shore with favouring wind
We sail across a bay to "Serpent's Head,"
First of three cliffs, planted like towers in the sea,
Sundered some half a league. Then,—for the moon
Lighted our way, and the night airs blew kind,—
Down a long desolate land our galleys steered,
Where nothing showed, no clustered huts, no glow
Of hunters' fires, or village torch, or gleam
Of shallop's sail, or paddle of canoe.
Only wild rocks, by scorching suns burned bare,
Under the moonbeams grey and black; thick bush
Edging the tawny sands, wherefrom we heard,
Commingling with the moaning of the surf,
The roar of prowling lions. 'Tis a tract
They call "the low shore"; by thy life! a place
Hard and unlovely as Amenti's gates.

Nathless when fell the night-wind all three ships
Manned oars and rowed with will; for we were fresh,
Rested, well fed. So all day long those blades
Tripped to the music of the flute and drum
Over the ocean floor; and jocundly
Rower from rower took the sweat-stained oar.
On evening of third day when we were spent
And evil weather lowered southwardly,
I seek a cape, juts friendly to the sea,
By two small islands shielded, where we find
Fair shelter, and make commerce with a tribe
Of peaceful fishers.

Then, by hanging crags
And rock-strewn beaches, with a range to north
Of towering mountains, we do skirt a coast
They name the Uplands. Outside on the main
The waves roll high, but under reef and shoal
Quiet paths help us till the great sea sleeps
And once again by moonlight, wafted on,
Without an oar we passed Sharôn's huts;
Sail down beyond a black hill, hung with woods
Till moored at Attelet, where long reefs lend
Good shelter-spot, we wait the northern winds,

Which, gently breathing, bring us plain in view
Under a hill, a rock, shaped like a sail,
Seeming to round a castle-fashioned crag
Washed by the surf.

Still speeding on, we come
Beyond Shangâni and a shallow bight
To Merka, on a sandy mount. And here
A pilot from the savage people told
The coast-names and the course to steer. At eve
By Brawa he would have me take the Dove
Outside the reef which gave to Ram and Whale
Good refuge, saying that my ship "rode deep."
But at the southern end a current brake
Against the wind. The channel we would seek
Boiled with a sea-race. If right on we hold
The rocks must take us; if we try the gap,
Short wavelets, breaking angry, drown my ship.
Already hardly can the rowers keep
Their benches, and the curling brine bursts in.
I was at loss: I cried, "The oar-ports plug!
Make fast the hatches! Come, for your lives, to deck!"
When Nesta, at my side, fearless and calm,
Whispered me, "Master! no sea-lore have I,

But on our great sweet waters twice and thrice
I have beheld a strange thing done at this
Which ended well. Suffer thy servant here
A little of her will." At that she turned
Where, at her cabin entry, swung a lamp
Lighting the image of her country's God
Done grim in gold and ivory: for whom
By night and day she fed that flame. The lamp
Held of the sunflower oil two measures full;
This did she seize, and with her lithe strong wrist
Flung it to windward. By thy life, O King!
Soon as that oil did fall upon the sea
It mingled, spread and widened in a film
Of diverse colours which enchained the waves
Breaking their crests down, flatting what was worst
And hardest of their rush; so that no more,
Tho' 'twas at roughest in the middle race,
The green hills leapt on board: scarcely one crest
Wetted our deck; my galley safely steered
Into the channel: Nesta with her slaves—
The two Egyptian handmaids kneeling here—
Laughingly tying up her sea-drenched locks.

So came we, nothing harmed, down all that shore,
Ever inside the reefs, skirting a land

Was all red stone and bush, and hanging shelves
Of sand and rock which took the ceaseless rage
Of tumbling billows, in a noise and spume
Terrible, deadly. Yet the Silver Dove
Flew straight and sure, till at a river's mouth
We entered glad. The black folk name the stream
Juba. The place was good: we rested there.

END OF THE THIRD DAY

# THE FOURTH DAY

# THE FOURTH DAY

*Ithobal sails the Unknown Sea*
*Where divers gestes and merveilles be;*
*He hath a dream on Afric's strand*
*The meaning strange to understand.*

MAY the King live in greatness, peace and strength!
May he have favour of the Awful Gods!
Thus far, O Pharaoh! were thy vessels come
By sailing of six moons; in sooth so far
There was another land and sea and sky.

Think not thy servant's tongue a lying tongue
If he shall tell thee that while ye put south,
Day after day, and night succeeding night,
Close-clinging to the shore, or, with fair winds
Scudding from point to point, the stars ye know
In Egypt's dark and in the murk of Tyre,
Which go around the North Star and around,
And have their seasons fixed to rise and set:
All these sank low and lower in the sea

Astern of me. And Ishtar's Star sank down
Deeper and deeper towards the leaping waves
Till, where we camped at Juba, look! it sate
No higher from the margin of the main
Than shines thy pharos at the mouth of Nile.

Moreover, as we measured league by league
Of multitudinous billows and long coasts
Forever leading South as if this Earth
Stretched edge to Sun—nay! and beyond the Sun—
For, mighty Pharaoh! where our camp was pitched
Yon orb which rolls in gold through Egypt's sky
And at his highest—even in the Crab—
Here southwardly doth set—that self-same Sun
Blazed northwardly and went to setting north,
And rose in the northern east;—I say new stars
Week after week sparkled into our sight;
New skies; new constellations: Oh! a world,
A heaven, unviewed by any Mage or Seer,
Unnamed by Soothsayers, Astrologers—
Our eyes the first to watch its gleaming swarms.
Brightest of all there grew up from the waves—
One moon before the Star of Ishtar sank—
A wondrous light,* four splendent orbs so ranged

* Southern Cross

As are those four great jewels on thy breast
O Mighty Pharaoh! with one smaller star
Like to thine emerald button, holds them back:
A breastplate, target, or a cross, might be,
Its shape nigh to four-square: we steered by it
When the North Star went down and helped no more.

The river runneth seaward 'twixt low banks
Of tufted sand; men may not find its mouth
Passing aloof, unless one guide the eye
Like our black pilot knowing well all signs;
And, at dry time crafts cannot enter there
By reason of a bar where great waves burst,
Would wreck tall ships. But when the river brims,
And sea swells full, galleys may make their way
In quiet weather to the peaceful stream
Flowing a bowshot broad 'mid sandy flats.
Here huge scaled crocodiles drowse in the sun;
And mangroves, glossy-leaved, whose arching roots
Are populous with creeping things and fish,
Breathe forth at sunset poison. Yet, inside
Strong mind I had to stay and fill my ships
With meat and meal, and learn where we had come
And what the peoples were, and if, beyond,

Lay secrets hidden for my lord the king.
Long parle, and perilous we held; their chiefs—
Bedecked for battle, clad with lion skins
Or monkey-fur or spotted leopard's pelt—
Sat fierce along the beach, their warriors
With spears, and shields of hide, and bows, and clubs,
Waiting for word of peace or war. I bade
My trusty Tyrians gird their swords; we stood
Ten-score stout men who knew not fear—with those
Aboard, sufficient guards. I would not brook
From the wild men ill-dealing; but my guide,
My star of women—Nesta—murmured me:—
"Suffer their ways a little, 'twill be well;
They do consult their Gods." Thereat she used
Strange words seemed sweet to them; but these beat heads,
In sudden reverence on the sand, and clasped
Hands across breasts as though a Goddess spake:
Then brought their sorcerer—a painted priest,
Hung with men's bones, and teeth of snake, and beads,—
Who, with dark arts, and magic mumbled spells,
Plucked, from a basket near, a cob of corn;

Laid it on earth, then grovelled, moaned, and writhed:
And where the corn was, look! a little snake!
Whereat the savage people yelled for war.
But Nesta spake again; then took a shaft
From Gondah's quiver; laid it on the earth,
Drew from her breasts the little amulet
Which helped her at her prayers; and, clasping this,
Bowed down over the arrow. When she raised
That fearless visage, lo! no arrow there!
But a long, glittering, green, lithe serpent hissed,
Which seized the sorcerer's worm and swallowed it.
Then the wild people shouted loud, "Peace! peace!
Peace with the strangers!" And they bring much gifts
And kiss the fringe of Lady Nesta's gown,
And lay their foreheads on her feet; whilst I
Made question of my mistress whence her craft:
But she, her lips set firm, softly replied:—
"My silence steads thee better than to tell;
Things seen are not so true as things unseen;
The Gods are with us! be content, sweet Sir!"

Thereat we took the ships in. From the hills,

Thirty days' journey off the river came
Broad, lined by canes, with deep pools interspaced
Where the great river-horses rolled and washed
And strange things stole to drink,—the water-buck,
The long-faced hartebeest, quilled porcupines,
Crooked-tusked wart-hogs, sable antelopes,
The grey sagacious elephants, and he,
Who roams tyrannous lord of all the woods,
The tawny lion. And there flocked strange birds,
Bustards, and many-coloured doves, and kites,
Waders, and fishing-fowl, and birds with ears,
Which slay the lizards; and another, calls
The hunter to the tree where honey hides.
Here a whole moon we moored, and beached our keels,
And freed them of sea-grass, and hacked away
Sea-shells, and brine-rust from the bilge. We made
The leaks all good, with juice which flows like milk
From wounded trees, but dries to pitch, and binds.
Also we mended well what was amiss
In hull and gear, and roped our sails anew;
Re-stowed the holds, and laid for ballast there
Millet, and sesamum, and shark-flesh dried.
Alack! I lose upon the channel here
Five of my faithful ones; a river-horse

Seized in his massive jaws a shallop's side;
Crushed the frail boat, and of the six within
Only did Sothis 'scape. And twice in sleep
The crocodiles dragged down a Tyrian.
Then fever took my crews; some score had died
Till Lady Nesta taught us where to find
A herb was bitter, with a lance-head leaf
And purple blossom; and the broth of this
Did surely cure. Whilst the ships lay at rest
We rode the river upward until rocks
And headlong rapids stayed us. Was a town
Of peaceful naked folk, set in a grove
Of nut trees:—'tis a stately, gallant growth,
Will yield you twenty-score for food, or give
The sweet tree milk in its own ivory cup.
The town was walled with thorn lest lions snatch
Sleepers by night, or enemies assail;
Or those four-handed tribes, the long-tailed apes,
Steal the ripe nuts. There came a caravan
Of traders from the hinder-land; we spake
With their chief peoples. Wonderful to hear
Their stories of the secret world beyond.
Fifty days' march inland—a mount they said
Lifts its long ridge a league-high to the air,
And hath forever in the burning blue

A crown of snow. And yet beyond, vast seas*
Shut in the hills, where one might row and row
Eight nights and days and not reach nether shore.
Moreover, from this mighty hollow flows
A broad strong river, leaps in thunderous fall
Down a vast steep: then runs north—north—north—aye! north—
Whither none wotteth. O my lord the King!
Maybe this is the fountain of thy Nile!
Not Lady Nesta knew; her country lay
Far off—far off—she said; yet she had viewed
Wide inland waters; had heard speech of men
With tails, of pigmy men dwelling in woods;
Naked, dust-coloured, using poisoned shafts;
Of men that lived around a towering mount,
With changeless cap of snow, who ate their kind,
And made dark sorceries.

We put to sea
Scantier in company, but well refreshed,
Refitted, good for toil, glad to steer on
Whither the Gods might lead and thy great will.
Yet of the coast-folk none would sail with us
Save one grey ancient knowing of the bays

* Victoria Nyanza.

And lacking for his withered belly meat.
"Ye go," they said, "to death! there is a way;
We wot the road; but not how to return.
Best die in daylight: not in night and hell."
Still we stood forth; fair ran the rippled sea;
New-painted on its wavelets shone the ships;
Under our stems, like birds before a plough,
Over the silver furrows flying fish
Darted in flocks; white sea-birds, wide of wing,
Soared round our masts, and screamed for orts; before,
Behind us, gambolled dolphins, glossy-black,
Pearl-bellied, mocking with their speed our oars.
Full fed, by friendly winds favoured and moon,
Down a long coast we scudded, rimmed with sand
And then red hills; and, by the daytime, isles
Crowding along the sea: in shore of these
The rolling waves ran low. We passed flat reefs
Where sea-fowls nest, and sleek seals drowse i' the sun,
And then a rock washed all around by waves,
Built like a citadel; one would believe
This spot a fortalice, planned for some war.
Afterwards the clouds lower, storm portends,
Shelter were well. My dark-skinned pilot points

Where two white patches on a sandy hill
Mark refuge; 'tis an island, thick with huts,
Fringed with the mangrove-tree, who loves to dip
Her feet in the salt. An inlet opens fair;
Our oarsmen strain to reach it; while the sky
Begins to blaze with lightning, and the sea
Blackens beneath the thunder-clouds. My Dove
Guides Ram and Whale into a still lagoon
Where we ship oars and praise the Gods anew.

—

'Tis seen that mercy breedeth love, O King!
My lady had for maidens, damsels twain,
Bond girls of Egypt, Asenath and Seet,—
Who tended her and tired her hair. Goodwill
Had grown between the mistress and the maids;
For Nesta was born gentle; and no soul
Near her, but joyed in sunshine of her smile.
The maids to bathe betook them in the creek,
Swimmers of Nile, glad of their water-play;
Laughing they clove the milk-warm evening wave
In strife who should be first to bring to deck
Blue lotus-buds; and Nesta from the ship
Beat her soft palms to cheer them. Presently
A glitter of grey light beneath the green!
A black fin cuts the water! Nesta cries:—

"A shark! the shark!" and then her countenance
I first saw fall; for, 'twixt the maids and ship
Steered the fierce murderer of the deep, aware
Of his sure prey; and they, aware of him,
Bent anguished eyes on their pale mistress there.
Death if none helped, death unto him who helped!
Then with set lips my mistress uttered word,
Half prayer, half mandate, and those Africans
Whose necks she saved from knife of Tyrian priest—
Saw—understood,—and for sweet duty's sake
And love of her kind eyes, did this, O King!
A lance-head lay on deck, barbed at the point,
The shaft new sharpened for its ashen pole
A cubit long. Gondah strips off his gown,
Grips the sharp steel, and rolls the cloth around,
Leaping into the sea; so Handah too
Holding his fighting-knife. With this the boy
Strikes at th' attacking fish, who hath in front
Young Gondah swimming. Savaged with the stroke,
The monster turns to seize; opes his fell jaws,
Toothed terrible, forgetting what he sought,—
Those naked maidens. Look! the fearless boy
'Tween jaw and palate of that dreadful beast
Thrusts the wrapped spike. The murderer closes down

The cruel mouth, but hath a bridle fixed
Will ride him to his death. Mad wallows he
While Handah stabs and stabs. All impotent
Rolls the baulked fish into the crimsoned depths:
The maids come trembling home. But Gondah's arm
Was gashed from wrist to shoulder by those fangs:
Mortal I deemed till Lady Nesta dressed
The deep-cut wounds and laid some simples in,
And bound all with fine linen, fair and spiced;
While at her feet the crouching African
Gave his life, ten times over, with his gaze.

Asquat upon the deck, munching his grain,
Mine ancient conned the galleys southwardly;
A low coast on the left, then close to shore
A yellow island, Manda; this we skirt
Since the black pilot saith, "Lamu lies nigh,
Where water is, and goodly markets meet."
At Lamu presently we moor; a town
Set on a long, low isle of silver sand,
Fronting a river's mouth—"Ozi" 'twas named-
The people friendly, liking well to trade.
We buy of sim-sim in their bags of mat,
Plantains and nuts, for linen-cloth and beads.
"Whither go ye?" they ask. "We go," I say,

"As far as yonder coast goes stretching South;
As far as yonder ocean thither rolls."
"Know ye the road?" "The end of it we know,"
They answered; "it is darkness—it is death;
It is where lives that God who suffers not
That others live; whose name, to utter it,
Would make the thunder speak and the rains fall.
Yet hence a little space the road is good,
Ye shall come soon to islands of the sea:
M'vita that hath fair harbours, Leopard's Cape,
Malindi; then Oyambu's creek and huts;
And after M'vita, looms the Isle of Spice—
Pemba; and then the great rich Monkey-Isle—
Zangue, where ye may find men to show course
Nearer and nearer to what goal ye seek
Outside the lawful waters. As for us,
We will die where our fathers lived and died."

We beached at white Malindi; coral reefs
Break the grey billows ere they reach the sand.
Northward, a sandy bluff; behind the beach
Fan-palms, with flat crowned thorn-trees, and a
plain
Of goat-grass and ilook; innermore stands
A range of hills. There was a cavern here

Carved in the soft stone by a stream that broke
Out of the woods; and bowered fair and green
With climbing flowers and plants that love the moist;
And hanging canes, where golden lizards glanced
And bright sun-birds, like living jewels, sucked
The honey blooms. Outside, the blazing day;
Within, cool gloom, and soft, clean cushions spread
Of silvery sand. Its peace invited us—
My lady and thy slave: for noon was red,
And we had wandered far, glad of firm Earth,
New from unsteady footings of the decks
At entrance I did lay my shoes aside,
And hung my cloth on spear; who enters then
Unasked, must die: it is the Libyan law.

I fell to slumber in that cavern, King!
And had strange visions. In my sleep I saw
A Queen of stately stature, dark of hue:
Dark, but most comely: oh! a form and face
Exceeding beautiful; the black, curled hair,
Clustered on shining brow and velvet nape
In such wise that no diadem was lacked
To grace its jetty glory. Yet the head,—
The Sovereign head in majesty supreme—

Albeit touched with sorrow, touched with shame—
Wore a great crown was beat of burning gold,
Bordered and bossed with jewels such as Thou,
Lord Pharaoh! keepest not in Treasure-House.
For round its rim and on its circling bands
Mingling with moony pearls had robbed the sea
Of all its choicest wealth—glittered great stones
Of sard and amethyst and lazulite,
Turkis and sapphire, beryl, jasper, jade,
With rubies red as doves' blood, chrysoprase,
Lucent as light of Spring, and adamants
Which shut the dayshine in, and flashed it forth
Like little Suns. And on her shapely arms,
Dark as the date's stone, softer than its bloom,
Great armlets hung of hammered gold, set close
With emeralds and coral. Round the neck,
Carved like thy porphyry columns, black and smooth,
A gorget, all of hammered gold, was clasped;
In shape a slave ring; and the sweet strong breasts,
Two hills of ebony entopped with rose,
Were crossed and braced with the slave's shoulder-straps
Done all in burnished gold. The Queenly One
Lay, in a leopard's skin enwrapped, whose sheen
Dappled with night-black rayings and rosettes,

Clung supple to the lovely waist, and took
The bendings of her beauteous limbs. Her hands,
Moulded for force and tenderness, to grasp
Shaft of swift spear, or coy a lover's cheek,
Were manacled together with rude grip
Of golden chains. And the fine feet of her,
Carved of black alabaster,—nobler made
Than ever Goddess yet in shrine or fane
Had worshippers to kiss,—shook when they moved
Links of a tinkling slave-chain wrought in gold.

Thus bound she lay, this goodly youthful Queen:
And only by her eyes—wonderful eyes,
Full of disdain, half conquering her despair;
Full of despair, half banishing disdain;
Lighted with pride and pity, sufferance, rage-
Knew I she lived. Her prison seemed a lan
Vast, various, gilded from the North to Sout
By always shining summers; rich with plains
Of arable and tilth: with orchards grown
Where birds and deer were gardeners; with woods
Where giant trees made mansions of green light,
Peopled by unknown tribes; with rivers born
From horns of flower-clad mountains, lifting high
Shoulders of snow into the burning blue,

Taking their fruitful way, through valleys, fair
With blossoming reeds and floating lotus-buds
And feathered waving canes, and then made pools
In bosom of their hills, which were like seas
So wide from coast to coast. Deserts were there,
Dry barren deserts where the spotted wolf
Findeth no drink but blood; and antres deep
By ill-folk habited; and poisonous swamps
Where none might pass and live. The wilderness,
The waste, the marsh, the barren upland scrub
Where wild beasts rage; these things did lie around
That prisoned Lady's bed, shutting her off—
Or so I deemed—from help and humankind.
Yet there was help, for at her girdle swung,
Thonged to its perfect work of beaded seeds,
Two keys of gold. As if by some two locks
Which these might open—were there friendly aid—
Way would be found to set that bound Queen free;
To give her lovely life and mistresshood,
And all for which the Gods had fashioned her:
So rich, so beautiful, so noble! Nay!
One bar did let and hinder! Round this land
Ran two wide borders, blue, immense, profound;
Beset with dreadful perils, hard to cross,
Long to unfold, which must be nathless crossed,

Must be unfolded,—this way first, then that,—
Ere the sweet Queen could rise.

And then, dread Lord!
I saw the silver dove of Ishtar light
At those sad, captive feet, as when it drew
Mine own steps to the slave-bazaars in Tyre;
And in its beak a sunflower seed, which means
"I follow, follow always"; and I heard
Murmured from that most sovereign mouth the words,
"Ithobal, son of Magon! succour me!"
And I,—"But how, Most Noble?" And she sighed,
"With ships, thou Tyrian! And with these gold keys."
Then seemed I once again aboard; yet ah!
What waste of waters! what mad whirl of waves!
What dreadful rocks! What shores that slide and slide
Out of the blue of sky into sea's green
And back into the blue; and never cease
And never turn, or turn only to show
New coasts that trend north, north and always north;
Till the strayed sun, that set upon our right,
Dips on our left again; if we come live

To the ocean-gates I know and come with ships.
Yet in my vision, King! I had but two.

Moreover, Lord! I dreamed strange sequent dreams.
Years rolled, and reigns and generations. Nay!
Thy realm had passed: thy piercing Pyramids
Had melted into bluntness with the suns
Of sweeping centuries. Yet, while those sped
Folks found, it seemed, the imprisoned Queen and
brought
Some help and homage. In my vision shewed
Men in white garments, Arab men who bore
Money and gifts, taking away for these
Ivory, and gold, and slaves, and spiceries.
And there rose kings, black lords of flattened face
And iron breasts, who ruled the tribes by blood
And kept what peace they knew. Then at the last
Strange mariners I saw sail from the West;
Their chief of noble bearing, bearded, fierce,
With galleys four came downward on my track,
And round the dreadful Cape and put to north,
Where I had southward rowed and southward sailed;
Until in this same cavern where we lay
I saw him stand and gaze towards the port
Where his bruised fleet did anchor. Then I heard

The imprisoned Queen sigh,—"Ithobal of Tyre,
The blue wide barrier hath been rended twice!
The sea's stern girdle falls away from me!"

Yet did my vision hold. White faces came
More and more frequent through the perilous belts,
The thirsty desert, the enfolding hills,
The murderous tribes, the lion-haunted wilds,
The slave-paths, and the burning villages,
To where the Lady dwelled. But prone no more!
No more in chains! She sate upon a throne
Carved out of tusks and gold, with jewels decked,
Draped with her own royal robes: the sweet proud eyes
Gleaming with joy and grace of fresh life found;
While Ishtar's dove cooed, and my dream was done.

But Nesta laid her face between her palms,
And bowed her head, and kept long silence. Then
She lifted on me look of tenderness,
And spake these words: "Master! be comforted!
Thy dream is good and true, and giveth thee—
What the Gods may—to see drawn back the veil
Hiding the things that will be. These will be!
Long, very long hereafter they will be.

She whom thou didst behold chained and alone,
Sore-suffering, shut away from love and hope;
She was my AFRICA, my darkened Land,
My hid forgotten Land; whose child I am,
Whose lover; and for whose sake I have lived
To be thy mate and guide. Her days begin!
Ithobal's ships, much-daring, shall break through
The sea-bars—blue, immense,—that hemmed her in;
And there shall come to her adventurers
Seeking her gold—for that is how the keys,
Fashioned of gold, feign way t' unlock the gates.
And with gold-seekers shall go merchantmen,
And tramp of many caravans; and trade
Which, pushed with blood, shall end in peace and wealth.
Nay! Stay!" she said; "also I see that one
Who doubleth back on this sea-track of thine,
And cometh hither to our very cave
Twenty-one centuries hence: a western chief,
Iberian, swart and brave: the voices say
His name to me in Greek: I wist not what;
I wot not why: but they bid write it so."
Thereat,* on the white sand, with lids shut close

* Nesta foresees Vasco di Gama, who did visit Malindi.

And slow-moved finger, this mark she did trace

F

I know not and she knew not wherefore thus!
But 'tis a letter of Æolians.

A little while she paused; then from her breast
Drew forth the precious amulet of gold
That helped her at her prayers, and clasping this
Dropped o'er her face her headcloth; lay awhile
Cowering and crouched: then she spake once again:
"This is a high deed which Thou doest, Lord!
Mother of many deeds! Past thee and him
And those who follow, and the acts to be,
And the long patience of the waiting Gods,
I see my Land with Sister Continents
Sisterly seated: her dark sons I see
From wars and slave-yokes freed. These sunlit
shores
Happy with traffic, while a thousand ships
Sail on the waves first clove by Ithobal."
This was my vision, Pharaoh! in the cave.

South from Malindi ran we with soft airs
Breathing off shore; so did I let all drive

Over warm waters, under scorching skies
To the green island Pemba, where we lay
Safe anchored in a shallow gulf, was lined
With spice-brush and the pale green aloe-spears
And the wild tree-wool; for a hard wind came
Hot from the south, and far away at sea
Pillars of cloud and water passed; storm-whirls,
Which with fierce rage and furious roar uptore
The heavy, rolling billows, flinging them
In scud and spume into the tortured air,
Which howled and twisted till the heavens seemed
brine,
Hiding the sun. In such a water-spout
My galleys had been as the gnats that drown
Where Nile leaps wildest. But our sailors burned
Sweet incense to the Sea Gods; and next morn
The tempest spent its wrath, the loud winds lulled;
Lightly we set from Shâki, steering straight
For Zangwe—'tis an island, great and fair,
Sitting along the coast; with downs and woods
And harbour looking to the sinking sun
Where we made port, seven moons of voyage done

END OF THE FOURTH DAY

# THE FIFTH DAY

# THE FIFTH DAY

*Ithobal, ever sailing South,*
*Enters at many a river's mouth;*
*Through fair and foul; 'mid joys and woes*
*Unto the land of gold he goes.*

HEALTH and longevity to Egypt's King!
The Mighty Pharaoh! May the all-seeing Gods
Grant thee good peace! We lay at the great Isle
Till the moon filled her sickle to a shield;
Then, heartened, sailed again into the South.

How oft we beached, how oft we crept for fear
Behind reef-wall; how oft—save for Kneph's help
And Ishtar's mercy—we had seen our ships
Splintered on savage cliff or lurking rock,
Or by huge hissing billows overwhelmed,
'Twere long to tell, nor good, O Lord of Lords!
For patience of thine ear. Still southward rolled
The unbroken coast, white, yellow, red, or brown.

Rugged with headlands, rounded with low dunes,
Beached with black stones, or silvery sands, or belts
Of the mud-loving mangrove. So we passed
Upanga's bluff, and where the low shore holds
"The House of Peace": Sinda, Koronjo's reef,
Kutâni's ruddy wall, Mafia's Isle
With angry breakers fenced; Rufiji's mouths
Where Sea-cows live,* which have a tail and fin
And fishy forms: yet—I lie not, O King!
Breasts of a woman and give suck.
We spy Mirambe's brow and, o'er Kirinje's huts,
Long flat-topped hills. Then the tall nut-trees wave
On Songa. Thence athwart two shallow gulfs,
Nondo and Kuvu, unto Lindi's stream—
Good watering;—and hard by, the Mushroom Rock,
Madjovi. So through Mnazi's sheltered smooths
To where Rov'uma pours into the green
Her turbid flood, with blood of many a slave
Foul mingled. Then the Kongo Cape we round,
Which seems an island as one sails from north;
And slip, well-pleased, from storm and savage seas
To timely shelter of the foam-washed reef
Fronting its shore.

* Manatee

These were the names we heard
Of pilots, fisher-folk, and merchant-men
Trading the marge with shallow feeble craft,
Ill-rigged for evil weather; yet their seas
Well known to them, and here they bid us mark
The giant current* of mid-ocean,
Part itself like a branching stream of earth,
To flow this side and that. Next Ulû's Isles,
Majumbi's coral crags; and then, in swarm,
Islets,—Kerimba's archipelago;—
Imo and Fumo, and their sister rocks
Perilous of approach; next, seven sharp hills
Over Arimba; Pomba Bay behind
Lent friendly haven. Skirting Pardo's point
Dark hillocks show in the bush; follow steep slopes
Rich-wooded; then a hill, lofty and white,
So shaped that one might deem, coming from north
'Twas a great galley of thy Nile at sail.
Afterwards, under lee of Mozambik we rest,
Well-covered. For a fierce wind drew
Betwixt the main and certain sea-girt land
Whereof they spake, towards the rising Sun,
A mighty Island.† Being calmed, we rowed
Across Mokambo Bay, and lay awhile

* Great Equatorial Current. † Madagascar.

In Mluli River where within the mouth
A green isle towered,* inhabited by Apes.
By thy Soul! Pharaoh! even thou hadst smiled
To watch the grave-tailed elders of the troop
And monkey-mothers with their furry babes
Viewing thy ships approach; hardly less men
Than those who pushed from shore with food to sell
On log or light canoe. 'Twas at the close
Of the eighth moon we oared from Kilman
And came by rosy bluffs and running hills
To where the deep sea darkened to the flood
Flung by a lord of rivers, broad and deep,
Far draining from the inland.

'Twas a stream †
Vast as thy Nile, dread King!—Luâbo named—
Coming adown from distant hills and lakes
Through full five hundred leagues of wild and wood,
And falling to the salt by many mouths
With black groves fringed, and barred by shifting sands.
Yet, with full sea, and patient watch, a ship
May happy entrance find. We lowered sails,
And on the broad green rollers oared our way,

* Monkey Island. † The Zambesi.

By ample channel, to the upper pool
Where the great river rested, ere it gave
Its tribute to the main.

Under a tree
Smooth-barked, with slender leaves, whose massive trunk
Ten of my Tyrian rowers, clasping hands,
Could not encompass, we did set the camp,
Thorn-girt, well guarded, for the folk were rude,
The country troubled. Yet these eyes have seen
No fairer, King! for sylvan majesty
And wonder of the works the high Gods mould.
'Twas the beasts' home,—man came a stranger there.
If one did wander on the river's marge
A world of forest creatures stole to sight.
The bush-pig squeaked; the wart-hog, in the reeds,
Grunted and wallowed; shaggy buffaloes
Cropped the young grass between the ant-hills; deer
Mottled and dappled, darted through the brake;
Bush-buck, and water-buck, roan antelopes,
And sable antelopes; and o'er the open waste
The stately elands roamed, with bearded gnus.

The kudu snorted from the thorny flat,
From waving marishes where bitterns fished;
And river-horses bathed and crocodiles
Dried their grey bulk i' the sun, and with cold eyes
Blinked for their prey. Yet was it wondrous, King!
These would not slay their friends! A spur-winged bird
Ran frolic o'er the monster's scaly spine,
And from his frightful jaws picked water-lice,
While round his couch of slime the painted duck
Sported; flamingoes preened their rose-red wings;
The great grey herons slept upon one leg;
And all those river things had peace of him.
Such is the jungle law; yet, if a doe
Timidly tripped to drink, if careless slave
Drew nigh to fetch of water; look! a rush
Of that live log! a snap of rending teeth!
And peace was broke, and the stream bloodied.
Turn
Into the grove of green mimosa trees
Gilt by ball-blossoms, and we heard the doves—
Bright plumaged, with the jewelled necks, and feet
Sandalled in red—coo love from branch to branch
Forgetful of the falcon on the crag,
And fierce king eagle circling in the blue.

The crowned cranes stalked about the silent pool;
The snowy egrets fed; the sacred birds
Of this thine Egypt—the staid Ibis—paced;
From hollows of the towering trunks by pairs
The horn-bills brayed; from purple bunch to bunch
Of the wild vines starlings—gold, ruby, blue,—
Sparkled; and coloured finches piped and pecked;
Small busy weavers built their hanging nests
To spite the robber snake, whose stealthy coils
In the dead leaves glistered.

With a chosen band
Of fearless ones, and followers from the tribes
We mounted—three canoes—the splendid stream
Many days rowing. For the people said
High up was sight of marvel—spot they named
The "Smoke that Speaks."* Sometimes with paddles plied,
Sometimes with cords, we made a perilous way
By gorge and rapid where the strong flood raced
Through rocks all foam, and hanging boughs; sometimes
The channel sobered, and then came to ear
From far aloof a murmur, night and day,

* Falls of the Zambesi.

Like whispering thunder. Now we quit the boats;
Strike through the forest; march three days—the noise
More and more filling all the air with roar
Unspeakable,—and, where the forest clears,
Away over the tree-tops hang great clouds
Lighted to golden white under the sun,
Thick black against the moon-beam. At the end
My band steps forth upon a level place
Fronting the dreadful glory. King of Kings!
Ithobal knoweth not to tell this sight!
The river—broad as is thy Nile in flood—
Comes from the nameless lands, green out of blue,
Comes from its purple hills, majestic, brimmed,
Its tide of silver quickening as it feels
The awful abyss draw. A long, low isle,
Whereon the moist airs breed a lavish growth,
Cleaves it in twain; then, as if loath to part
And mad to join again, the sundered halves
Plunge o'er the edge. Seemeth as if they hung
Fixed in their very leap; a curl of green—
Green as the light that strains through fan of palm—
Sits constant on the dizzy precipice
Down which the splintered river rages. See!

Just here the earth hath opened; the torn rock
Gapes to a night-black chasm, lit above,
Deep-black, death-black below. From this boils up
A steamy smoke as if Amenti there
Bubbled and raved; and with the smoke the
sound
Of a whole sky throbbing with thunder-blasts.
Sheer over rim of cliff, half a league long,
Into this hold of ravage and of wrath,
And flying spume, and murk impenetrable,
Dives desperate the river, dives adown
Three hundred cubits, if I judge aright,
And wildly mingled in its cauldron there,
The broken monstrous masses lace and lock
And ramp and rear; then bursting forth to light,
Go tossing under rainbows and wet rocks
And shuddering leaves, into a narrow gorge
Crosses athwart their course, scourging their rage
Into fresh-leaping furies; till this bulk—
Come from the fountains of a continent—
Gains room to calm; and in wide reach below
Slackens its sparkling angers, stays its speed,
Clears from its waves the bubbles and the spray
And, placid once again, lord of itself,
Goes bright and gentle to the awaiting vale.

'Twas tenth moon since the starting from thy shores,
O King of Kings! the light half of the moon.
At ebb we dropped to sea by western mouth
Of vast Luâbo—Lady Nesta guide—
For on that river there had lodged with us
Men of the upper country, merchant-men,
Tall and of comely visages, with garb
Richer than wont. Whose speech, when Nesta heard,
I marked her great eyes brighten, and her lips
Half open as to utter some glad word;
Yet did she hold her peace, of counsel wise.
But afterwards in private, clasping hands,
Whispered me thus: "Heart of my heart, dear Lord!
I spake thee true, telling of lands I knew
Outside all lands and seas beyond all seas;
And how, in tender years, they tore me thence
A captive girl, the daughter of a King;
And how by long, long journeys I was borne
Northward and north, entreated tenderly
For reason I was meek and fair to see:
And how in those ill days, my sad eyes saw
The darkness and the anguish of my Land;
Till night by night I dreamed of one should come

Fearless and masterful, with ships and men,
And find us out, and break the bonds of Hell
And be beginning of a glorious dawn.
Lo! this hath fallen: those within our camp
Come from my country. What they speak is speech
Of her who suckled me; of him who died
Fighting to save his folk. They know me not,
But bear good news, unwittingly. The Prince,
My brother, ruleth. All his land is still;
The pastures full of kine, the markets brisk,
The caravans eager to come and go;
And that which in thy home men most desire
Thy priests, thy Lords, thy Kings, Pharaoh himself,
The gold,—the rich red gold,—is boundless there;
Glistens in river-sands; gleams in the rocks;
Is as a common dross. The road thereto
Wends by a river, running to the sea,
Fifty short leagues from this the Sabi named.
Thou hadst desire, I know, some port to find
Where we could plant our grain; and, while it
    springs,
Careen thy ships, and make an enterpris
To win by traffic some commodities
Worthy of Pharaoh's feet. This is thine hour.
Sail unto Sabi or to Pungwê's mouth—

For those are neighbours—beach thine emptied
 hulls:—
Fill them, refitted, with the harvesting
Of wheat and barley. For what still remains
Of this hard voyage, stretches vaster yet,
More difficult, more dreadful than what's done.
Yet shall we at the last attain. Dear Lord!
Follow my counsel. I will show the way
To where a goodly ballast shall be got
For Ram and Whale and Silver Dove.

 With that
I launched and set to sea, ten moons being spent.
In days twain, and one night,—the currents fair,
But the breeze foul from south,—we made the
 stream,
Pungwê. The coast lies low; a sloping beach;
Then thickets; and, 'mid these, sandhills which rise
Shaped like thy pyramids. The tide, at springs,
Lifts my three galleys lightly o'er the bar
Into broad placid waters where a point
Lends certain shelter. Like a wall of waves
The flood comes in, filling the creeks and nooks,
And, draining forth again to sea, lays bare
Flats sodden and sharp spits, whereon you spy

The idle crocodiles drowse in the sun ;
The river-horses wade forth of the deeps ;
And turtles crawl to scrape a nesting place.
Here it 's well to be : we strand the ships ;
Build the stockades ; and open busy marts,
Where the shore-people, swart, and clad in skins,
Bring of their victuals, taking wares from us.
Thereon my Lady hath devices :—shears
The wool from Gondah's head ; pricks on the scalp
The token of her tribe ; when hair is grown
Sendeth him with a knot of trusty ones
And native people, bearing curious gifts,
Northward along the river ; while we pass
By easy march. The boy's one message was,
"Clip me and judge me by the sign."

Then too
I owe again this life—my King's and mine—
To Nesta. On a day we meet in parle
Chieftains and warriors of a warlike breed,
Questioning passage, asking weighty tolls.
We sit in circle on the river's brink :
They with their spears, my men with sword on knee,
And there pass angry words. But soon one brings
Wine of the country, brewed of millet seed,

Heady and sharp, served new in woven bowls
Of grasses; and the foremost black of them
Signs that I drink, with many a peaceful nod.
Whereat my watchful Mistress craftily
Drops in the drink a leaf—I know not what:—
Leaf of some flower, which withers, spits and turns
Dull black. I marvel, but she murmurs "Lord!
He hath not drunk; 'tis custom that they drink
Before their guests." Hereon I bid him quaff:
This vile one waxeth ashen; yet I bid,
Sternly entreating. They put by the bowl,
Baffled and anxious. As it standeth there,
A village hound, unnoticed, laps the stuff,
And, in a little, rolls its eyeballs, gasps,
And falls, all foam and spasms, on the sand.
The lying friendly draught was venomed! King!
My heart grew hot: I clove the traitor's head
From crown to chine. Shouting, the tribesmen rose
And fled: there would be war. Five days and nights
Swarmed they and buzzed like wasps around the
camp,
Shooting their shafts, firing the grass, intent
To slay us if they might, and spoil our stores.
On the sixth day,—we, being sorely pressed,
Half a score Tyrians slain, with camp-followers,

Water cut off, and valiant Hamilcar
Hurt in the thigh,—rings from the hills a blast
Of conches, a beat of drums; long fighting lines,
With spears and shields, show brave upon the ridge,
Who shout their battle-cry and leap adown,
In files and painted squadrons, to the plain.
Our foemen hear and fly. First of the host
A youthful chieftain, clad in pelt of pard,
Whose mounture is a striped horse of the wilds
Caparisoned in gold, rides nobly forth
With guard of well-armed men. Before our camp
He doth dismount: a herald, feather-girt,
Advanceth, crieth phrase of peace. But, look!
My Lady Nesta bids our gateway ope,
Paceth serenely forth: only her maids,
Attending—Seet and Asenath. She strips
The gemmed cloth from her silk smooth shoulder:
See!
Branded in red and white upon its ground
A lizard:—'tis the mark Gondah's skull bore
Beneath his wool. Which when the comely Prince
Views, he cries lustily, like one distraught
For utmost joy, and giveth loud command,
And claps his palms hard, flinging first his spear
After those fliers. Nesta, drawing nigh,

What noise! what tumult! what mad ecstasies
Of pride and pleasure! 'Twas their Princess come
Home out of bonds and darkness. Where she trod
Those fierce ones kissed the earth; to touch her gown
Was honour: for the Prince and all his tribe
Well knew the Makalanga lizard: sign
Of "Children of the Sun." Their clamorous glee
Scared the lean vultures perched upon the slain.
We were delivered and the road lay free.

Then marked I how my Lady's words came true:
Red gold grew here. Was hardly one of all
But had it for the apple of his lance,
Or pommel of his sword, or wore it bossed
On shield or sandal, or in burnished rings
On neck and wrist and ankles. At their feast
They served us broth and stews in golden pots.
Roast game lay on gold dishes. 'Twas as bronze
In Egypt, or as brass in Sidon's streets.
For where this river issues from its hills—
Wonderful granite hills, fantastic, weird,
Mightily cragged and cleft—the white rock holds
Gold in great veins; sooth! 'tis a land of gold.
Ugambe—'twas the Chief's name—made me learn

How his gold-workers delved. A deep shaft sunk
Some twenty cubits to the mother-bed,
And there this cunning hoard of nature hid
To tease and draw mankind! I did descend
And crept through cavernous ways and gloomy gates
Till we were come to a great chamber hewn
In the mid hill. There, lo! all round about
The soft gold glittered to the torches' flare
Out of its milky stone: sometimes in films,
As when they press the purple: sometimes flaked
Like glass; or spun like threads of silk; or pouched
Massive in pockets; or in branching lines
Like moss that grows in chinks, if moss were gold.
This rock, wealth-bearing, patient hands break out
And bring to air. There, slave-gangs set in rows
Pound with hard stone on stone the veiny stuff,
Crushing it small. This first they wash and sift
For the great pieces; afterwards they roast
What's left in furnace till the gold runs clear
Caked in the ash: so is their way with gold.

Wherefore, great Lord! because this thing is much,
And maketh wealth of the world and pleaseth kings,
And doth befit ev'n Pharaoh, it behoved
To guard the prize for thee, King Suleiman

Owned ships and men that brought him gold from
 Punt
And peacocks out of Ophir, and fine gems.
Thou, too, mayest have—shalt have—Lord of all Lords!
Thine Ophir in this region where we came
Empty, and whence we journeyed, turning back
After a six moons' sojourn,—rich enow
To buy the fleets of Tyre, if 'twere thy will.
For here the gold was dross; the friendly folk
Laughed at our lust for the pale yellow yield
Which will not fashion head of spear, nor blade
Of hunting-knife, nor wear a lifetime through
As iron armlet doth or ankle ring;
And bore no worth they said, save to be soft
In working and to take no rust. With that
Gladly they bartered it for beads and cloth
And whatsoever gear we had to give,
Of Syrian, or Egyptian. Nay, for love
Of Lady Nesta, and to honour guests,
They did bestow with gentle show of pride
Platters and bowls cast out of shining gold,
Pouches and girdles, fillets, amulets,
Neck-rings, and head-rings: so our caravan
Marched seaward from the hills with twelve-score
 slaves

Gold-laden, and another followed it
Or ever we set sail; thus I did fill
The Black Whale's hold with that rich ballasting
From keel to floor. I sent thee back thy ship
So freighted as was never craft before,
Dunnaged and stowed with gold. Sothës had charge.
I filled him with our rice and barley, raised
In two crops by the river; bade him press
Northwards for Suph, making his benches up
With slaves of Sabi. "When thou seest," I said,
The star of Ishtar lift i' the north anew
And reachest where we crossed that ten days' main,
Cleave to the coast till thou beest come to Suph;
Then enter by the island, and stand north
Till Pharaoh learn of thee and thou canst void
Thy cargo on the carpet of his throne."
Thou knowest, King of Kings! thy ship came home
And Sothës stands beside thee, who did bring
The Black Whale back, and from our silence, news.

Moreover, that these opulent fields be kept
Secure for thee and us, I made a pact,
Solemnly sealed with strange and ancient rites—
Confirmed by drinking blood and slaying goats—
Whereby the golden hills devolve to thee

Around the springs of Sabi. Thirty men
Among the Tyrians, skilfullest to build,
Stoutest to fight, best helps at every need,
Joyous in dangers, eager for high deeds,
I chose from out my rowers. These should take
Wives of the country, raise their dwellings, till
Sufficient earth for food—slaves serving them,—
And of the thirty, under Hamilcar,
Each should be captain over maniples
Of three-score warriors, drawn from bravest blood
Of Makalanga. Then, to make all sure,
They must have fortalice to hold the hills
And guard and delve the gold. I did ordain
There should be reared—where the rocks favoured us
And much fair water bubbled—structures twain
Which the wise Hiram did devise and plan.
Of these the foremost was a hold of war,
Massive, impenetrable, made to bear
All shock of battle, as the sea-cliff takes
The battering waves and turns their idle dash.
I bid them build it, where the broken crags
Gave coign and traverse and good vantage ground,
On forehead of a granite mountain scarped
Three sides. Along the fourth, to rear a wall
Shutting out all but birds. Within the wall

The stronghold, circular, with rounded ramps
Of hewn stone, laid ten cubits thick; the doors
Narrow, and giving entry by strait ways
Where but one man could pass; and those strait ways
So blocked with buttresses and ambuscades,
With cunning corners, fighting-holes and pits;
So from the walls above commanded, that
No foe could win alive from gate to fort,
Or shun deaths showered upon him. In the midst
The unfailing fount, good storage for the grain,
Space for the men-at-arms, fuel for food,
All deftly schemed. In time of peace my men,
Housed in Zimbabwê's groves, the guards at hand,
Would dwell serene and win the gold. At war,
Safe in their citadel, ten thousand foes
Could count as ten.

Beneath, on lower slope,
Wise Hiram drew for me a House of Gods—
Ishtar's and Bel's— ; was to be built to lodge
The Lords of Heaven most nobly; all of stone
Heedfully shaped, like Babylonian bricks,
Faultlessly squared; was to be oval-framed,
Cubits eight-score and eight the longer way;

Walls thick cubits fifteen, high, twenty-one;
And, crowning all the walls, should run a row
Of Ishtar's birds cut of the soft green rock,
With those high sacred pillars interplaced,
Which mean the Sun, and Life, and Love, and Death
And things men tell not of. Also those walls,
Laid to a hair's breadth, fashioned close and fair,
Nicely obeying what the Gods enjoin,
Should so stand, pierced with window and with door,
That at due time the Northern Stars we knew
Should through each chink let shine their holy light
On altar-slab and graven stele and floor;
So that men mark the Seasons, and the days
Of fast and feast. And Hiram schemed to build
Patterns upon the wall, with chosen stones
To such a point and such; a fish-bone course
Which meaneth what ye wist; and on south-eas
The zigzag pattern, sign of Water Stars
And of the Many-Breasted. These would show
The Solstice, when the ray of rising sun
Touched first this brick or that. Inside its walls
The House of Gods should spread a spacious Court,
By narrow doors and by strait ways approached,
Where, if he would, with five-score fighting men
Hamilcar might withstand the land in arms;

And, if they would, in days of peace, the Priests
Might on due altars, and in close-shut shrines
Pay Gods, and eke the Seven Nameless Ones
Homage and worship. The sites we set;
Handselled the quarries; hired the meaner sort
To chip and square, for all must be dry work,
No binding clay or lime, lest seeds blow in
And saplings, rooting in the joints, should grow,
Rending its face. But this when all is wrought
Shall stand as the eternal mountains stand
Unchanged, and tell the centuries to come
How Hiram builded on Zimbabwê Hill.

END OF THE FIFTH DAY.

# THE SIXTH DAY

## THE SIXTH DAY

*Ithobal, reaching the world's end,*
*A spacious harbour doth befriend;*
*Southward no more, but Northward now*
*Turneth his storm-tossed vessel's prow.*

GLORY and length of days, Great King, to thee!
The High Gods give thee victory and peace
And all Thy heart's desires! The ship I sent
Came to thy coasts—her precious freight unspilt—
After nine moons: so hadst Thou tidings, Lord,
Writ thee in gold from Ithobal, thy slave.

I, with two galleys launched, my Ram and Dove,
Stood southward yet again. Hiram abode
To build, and Hamilcar to keep the guard;
While, for those thirty Tyrians sent ashore
And lost ones in my crews by land and sea
By water or in battle, by wild beasts,
Or slain by sun, or sickly marish airs;

As many from the native folk I took,
Freemen and slaves; well-moulded ones, enured
To toil and trial. Some with Hanno filled
The empty benches of the Ram; and some
Joined service in the Silver Dove. We quit
The friendly river, well caparisoned,
Stuffed to the wales with stores: sails renovate,
Cordage new-coiled; masts, rigging, all a-taunt:
And those brave spirits that did wend with me
At this by danger's salt so seasoned down;
So wont to take the terror and the sport
With equal mind that, if the end were death,
Then death should be good port. The weaker ones,
In such stout company, lacked time to fear:
Sufficient if they followed Ithobal
And Lady Nesta; if their daily mess
Came warm and comforting when oars were ranged;
And on the deck or beach, in noisy dance,
Their feet kept time to the drum.

Yet we were come
So far, Lord Pharaoh, that it frighted me!
What had befell the Sun? Thy Spring on Nile
Is Autumn at that bound: thy Winter here
Shines Summer there: for this my thought was ripe

Well wot our Tyrian mariners that Bel
Goes through his constellations, moon by moon,
From Ram and Crab to Fishes. But, dread King!
Already at Zimbabwê, in its sky
Of fiercest weather, overhead the Orb
So swung that either shadow was not cast,
Or cast to southward; and when week by week
My keels still ploughed those never-ending fields
Of the wine-coloured main; still clomb the slopes
Of glassy waves, to plunge forever down
Through the sea-lace and spume; still saw the shore
Glide, ghostlike, shadowy, grey, interminable,
Bound by its girdle of a beach, or walled
With dreadful crags; and while the last stars dipped—
Of those we knew—under the rim; and stars
Nameless, fresh to our eyes flashed into ken,
The heart of this thy servant Ithobal
Melted ofttimes to water. Twice and thrice,
Lone on the poop, I beat my breast and cried:—
"We come too far!"

But, never once dismayed,
My Lady kept good courage. "Thou," she laughed,

"Captain of all the Captains, sailest here
Farther than what was Nesta's farthest; yet
Sound are thy Ships: the sky hath still its Sun
The winds come fair: thy willing rowers go
Whithersoever thou dost steer. I saw
Our Silver Dove of Ishtar on the stem
Thrice stretch her bright wings in this morning's
gold,
As hungering for what glory never bird
And never vessel found before. Sweet Lord!
Hold thy great heart! The coast doth know itself;
Its simple peoples pass, repass and talk:
Keep heart! I have a thing to comfort thee.
Less than five hundred leagues will bring us where
The long shore bends; and, trailing South no more,
Goes by a mighty horn, a Cape of Storms,
Laved with a wave that rolls from the World's End
Westward beneath a flat-topped mount, then turns
Northward and north and north, thy homeward
way."

So sped we onward all those weary leagues;
Now fanned by airs which hardly broke the blue,
Now scourged by storms which rent the ocean floor
And drove its hissing hills, all flake and foam

In headlong wrath. Anon, 'twas breath of
Heaven,
As if the Gods had thereabouts trooped down,
By golden stairways of the clouds, to dwell
'Midst their own weather in such Paradise
Of dimpled sapphire wavelets, whose white lips
Kissed the smooth Shore and jewelled her with
shells.
Then, whether it were life or fearful death
Waiting beyond for us in that dropped veil
Of the sea's distant purple none took heed,
None scanted meal nor did forego his song,
His dance and music: since if this were Fate
Sweet were it so to end. Anon, 'twould seem,
In tempest, or the terror of the surf
Bursting beneath our lee,—so close we saw
Our grave-place in the rocks—as if Hope died
In gloom behind us, and in face of us
Despair did point to Hell. Yet not for that
Was any oar-loom dropped: was any thigh
Thrust at the bench-board with less manlihood.
From chief to slave, ship-boy to timoneer,
These gave their souls with me to what so keeps
The souls of brave men safe. In pleasant times
The songs that Egypt hears, or Sidon sings

Kept our blades dancing. On the evil days
When we must run for shelter, not the winds,
Piping outside the reef where we would hide,
Could howl my children's cheering down.

Thus, Lord,
All these five hundred leagues of unseen sea
In forty days thy galleys overpassed,
Till, sailing free, a light air from the North,
Daylight just dim, we see the unending coast
Break to the right, away, far, far away:
Ahead, no land at all. The wide sea rolls
Steadfastly westward, in long hills and dales
So that with steep ascent we climb, to glide
By slope as steep into the trough of blue:
So deep ship sees not ship until they ride
Once again balanced on the curling crest.
No land to South, nor East; Westward we spy
White beaches and grey cliffs with hills behind
And forests hanging in the clouds. All day
The strong swell helps the wind to waft us on
Till there was brought abreast a wall of cliff,*
Dark-hued, three hundred cubits tall—a peak
Pointing each flank. O Pharaoh! now I know

* Cape of Good Hope.

That rocky ramp with its twin peaks on guard
Was of all Africa her utmost earth;
Was back-gate of the World; was where to turn,—
If the Gods willed—to find a homeward way
And come alive out of that nether death.

Even as we drew inshore, the sun went down
Far on our right: no man had seen that thing
In Syria or in Egypt. Crouching low
My grey-haired steersman hid his face and prayed.
But Nesta, holding fast the golden charm
Which helped her with her Gods, laughed low and
said :—
"Master! we have out-travelled even Bel!
The Sun-God is more weary than thy ships:
He sleepeth short of us. And see! where stalks
A tawny lion on yon grassy knoll
Hanging above the surf! Know ye that sign?
It is the Lord of Libya come to look
On men that have a heart within their breasts
Greater than lions."

As she spake, the clouds,
Gathering tumultuous o'er the distant ridge,
Stooped and let out a blast from forth the West
Full in our faces, driving down the swell,

Tearing its grey crests off in seething spray.
And with the wind the hail—great stones of ice—
That pelted decks and scourged the smarting sea;
And beat the billows flat, bringing amain
A new fierce turmoil of such waves as seemed
Each one a ruin. All our sails were furled;
Deck-hatches shut; fast-sealed the rowing-ports;
While our two banks of Thalamites in turn
Strained blades to keep us heading. If we broached,
The seas must come aboard, the o'er-whelmed craft
Must founder. Never saw thy servant yet
A deadlier run of breakers; by His name
Who dwells at Ascalon, I did not hope
To view another sun; but—more to cheer—
Myself I seized the steering oar and held
As best I might the Silver Dove to the wind:
Surely we had been lost, when Nesta plucked
My sleeve, and pointed where aboard his Ram
Good Hanno showed us safety. Not in vain
Summers and winters long on the Mid Sea
The salt had bleached his hair; the savage deep
Taught him its secrets. Axe in hand he cut
His mast and gear away; lashed round the wreck
His anchor rope, and, casting overboard,
Had veered the raffle forward through the waves,

And making fast on the stem-head, he rode
Secure by this sea anchor, whose defence
Broke the rough brine and kept the gallant ship
Steadfast to windward. We, too, likeways did,
Cutting away our mast and launching it
With sail and gear and rigging over side;
Till, like the Ram, at cable's-end the Dove
Hung, plunging to the angry wash, sore tossed,
But saved. Thus did we drift the wild night through,
And all a dismal day, and that next night,
Till morning brought us peace, with promise fair
Of easy shelter; since a spacious bay *
Opened its green arms for us to the left;
Whereto, hacking away our wreck, we stood,
Much labouring, for the sea ran strong; and faint
Were hearts and arms, yet life is sweet to save,
And this my lady on the bench by me
Plied the same oar-loom with her dark small hands,
What time, with cries of joy, the two ships shot
Clear of the surge, under a shelving hill,
Which shut us into quiet.

'Twas a spot
Stamped on the tablet of my soul by stress

* Table Bay.

Of utmost peril finding end in peace!
From head to head the gateway of the bay
Spreads a large league. An island * to the east
Sentinels that approach; inside a plain
Where one might build a stately city, King!
To keep the keys of all that Nether World.
Beyond it soars aloft a mountain mass,
Flat at the top like some prodigious roof,
This side and that side ending suddenly
With precipices sheer, which plunge adown,
Till from their feet another rounded slope
Rises this way and that. The northward spur
Takes form as if a lion's head did lift
From shaggy shoulders; to the south the hill
Hath such a shape as shows, in chine and haunch
A couchant lion. Far away are peaks
With wooded uplands and deep valleys, decked
By blossoming heaths, flame-coloured aloe-spears,
And garlands of wild grape. The country folk,
Simple and friendly, clad in skins or bark
Gave us fair welcome. 'Twas their winter time;
But the air mild and still, save when a cloud
Gathered upon the Table Mount, whereat
A savage west wind howled, and there would hap

* Robben Island.

Tempest and hail. Well pleased, we did abide
In port of that good hope; and, from a wood
Plucked straight-grown spars to make us masts again,
And trimmed and fashioned these, and set them up
Firm as before, using for stays and shrouds
The twisted strips of hide cut in the green;
Made good our broken oars; recaulked our seams;
The weary crews refreshed; filled full anew
The water-pots and meal-jars. Store was, too,
Of dried meat and of honey. When Gods give
They give with both hands filled.

A year had fled
And half a year, in sunshine and in storm,
Great Pharaoh! since we left thy sea of Suph.
Here was the end of earth! would the sea-road
Lead homeward all the way to North and thee?
Was there a westward path of unbarred main
Like to that eastern path, which we might cleave
And come to happy finish, and thy feet?
Or must we perish in the trackless deep
And thou not know, and no man living hear
Where in the dark Ithobal lost thy ships?
The shore-folk could not teach. Only they said
Traders and tribesmen, wandering from the West

Spake of blue sea, blue sea, always blue sea,
And coasts that stretched and stretched to northward. None
In their frail shallops ever dared to round
That neighbourhood cantle, where the rolling South
The roaring West encountered, and the tides
Breasted so high they seemed to mock the hills.
If we would die, 'twere best to wait a breeze
Blows from the east when the great mountain doffs
Its cap of clouds, and so steal out from clutch
Of the sea-demons. Peradventure peace
Might be upon us till the land was turned,
And then that would befall which must befall.

So we made sacrifice, and on a dawn,
All gold and saffron, let our painted sails
Fill to a favouring wind, and driving safe
Over smooth billows, ran the coast adown
And made the headland well, and shifted course
Straight for the North. Seven days the good breeze held;
Seven nights the moon of Ishtar gleamed for us.
Then, lacking water, and our rowers spent,
Under an island green, and white, and red,
Found we fair shelter. Sea-birds nested there:

Strange breeds * with paddle wings and silken necks,
Whose speckled eggs made the men pleasant feasts.
And next came mists blotting out sea and land;
And next, I most remember one low point,
Tree-fringed, which swarmed with apes; the furry
folk
Pelted us from the tree-tops with ripe nuts;
Chattering vain war. A river, after that,
So thronged with elephants browsing its banks,
That 'twas as though the sandhills swayed and
paced.
Were we but hunters there was ivory
To build a throne for Egypt. Then a stream †
The folk named "Golden Waters"; here a bar
Shut its wide reaches from the thundering main:
So spread they to a vast lagoon where, sooth!
All feathered folk of Earth did seem to dwell.
For clouds the sky had fowls. They soared or
swam,
Or waded in the shallows, spearing fish,—
Myriads and myriads: while upon the plain
Those cattle of the Gods,—the dappled deer,—
Were all the citizens. And, like the land
Where man's foot cometh not, the seas hereat

* Penguins. † Orange River.

Swarmed with bright life: in the air the albatross
Stretched wings to wind like two pale galley sails:
Or skimmed with yellow webs from crest to crest,
Or poised asleep in the scud. And, at a gut,
Where breeze and current laid a course for us,
Under a monstrous cliff, steep to the surf,
We held all day a merry company
Of racing dolphins, like black swine of the wave,
At gambol in the green: such glee of life!
Such joyous pigs of Dagon, that I stayed
The hand of one who aimed a shaft at them.
And farther on, whole islands white as snow
With droppings of the sea-fowl. Then a ledge
So thick with forms, half fish, half woman-wise,
Sleek-headed, melon-breasted, with dark eyes
Lustrous and soft, thou wouldst have thought them maids
Gendered by Sea-Gods upon river-nymphs,
Till the broad tails waved and they plunged,—the seals!
And nigh a bay—was called the Whale-Fish Bay—
We passed an islet, one huge marble rock
Hollow as is a temple-court, with halls
And shrines and corridors and cloisters high,
Filled with dim greenish light; its walls and roofs

Carved by a thousand tempests into dome,
Pinnacle, plinth, and ponderous architrave,
Whereof the entrance was a gateway beamed
By split slabs and a lintel ragged, vast;
The door-posts' weathered columns cut by waves
Grand as Thy Memphis. Into this the main,
Pouring its billows, lashed the floor to foam;
Spurted in milky fountains through the clefts;
Streamed in wan cataracts from shelf and coign;
All with such monstrous roar as if the Deep
Came there to speak, and bid us stay our quest,
With terrible commanding.

Farther north
We beached on the white horn of a wide bay,
Where sand-banks spread, and coral rocks awash
Broke the long swells on matted weed. She-whales
Flocked there to calve. By Him of Gaza, Lord!
Rare sight it was to see those monstrous dams
Shoulder the shallow water, sailing in
To bring to birth. No fish are these, O King!
No more than bat is bird because it flies;
No more than scaly crocodiles have fins
Because they swim. We had a mariner

Well seen in whales: a sailor oft on Suph
And in the Midland Sea. He showed us how
The Gods have framed Leviathan a beast,
Albeit of the deep. These giant-shes
Brought forth like women; suckled young at teats
Down by the vent; had nipples like a nurse;
And, so Bilhadad showed, because the calves
Sucked ill in water, could at will force milk
Into the youngling's throat. He taught us how
The thick white fat was wrapped over the frame
To keep the creature's blood at heating point;
And how the tail was set at end of chine,
Athwart, not lengthwise, for the better speed
In rising and descending. Also, King!
These monsters, placable, find bloodless food
In what the deep hath smallest and least seen;
Since every wave is filled with forms minute—
Shining by night—as is the air with gnats.
These and the other unregarded orts
Of Ocean's face the whale eats; to that end—
So crafty go the Gods,—Bilhadad showed,
He hath no teeth, but in the cavernous mouth
Ridges of bending bone, finished by shreds,*
By strings, and fringes, flexed inside the lips

* Whalebone.

To make the mouth all sieve. So will he gulp
A billow in his jaws, and, closing them,
Sift the brine forth by nostril and by lip,
To gain a pouchful. Were their appetites
Vast as their bulk, woe would it be, meseems,
For weaker tribes. One great whale misconceived
My Silver Dove to be her cub, and rolled
Motherly sides against us, breaking short
A score of oar-blades.

North,—still north we sped
With many a stay, till the "Black Cape"* was made,
A dark rock jutting from a sandy neck,
With friendly frith behind. Thence, past low woods
And shores by long swells lashed, into a port
Lobito named, where it was good to be.
We go ashore for meat; some ambuscade
Brown reed-buck in the canes; some, lance in hand,
Follow the moist and perilous paths whereby
The river-horses wend. Some haul the net
Along the yellow sands, or bait great hooks
To take the shark. Yet none for forest lore

* Cape Negro.

Or sylvan skill matched our bright Lady here.
We, with a band, went inland,—three days' march—
To spy the country or if trade might be.
But naked was it all, barren, and burned:
No life except the lizard's on the stone,
The vulture's in the sky. At that third eve,—
The path being lost, the water-bags all dry;
Food failing and the sun at act to set,—
My temper bent. "By Thammuz's blood!"—I swore,
"Ithobal is of stuff Gods use for fools
Since, Nesta, he hath led thee and these friends
To die a-thirst and hungry in the waste."
On this she smiled. If one had lightly laughed
At Ithobal in wrath,—one lip but hers,—
Blood would have washed it out; but not a whit
Her dark eyes quailed as mine flung round to her.
"Good Lord!" spake she, "thy ships have girdled now
Two parts, out of the three, of Africa,
And thou wilt knot the silver cincture tight
At Pharaoh's foot-stool. Yet for all thy skill
The treasures of my home thou readest not.
See! where we stand is meat and drink enough
To have and spare, if well ye wot the signs,
As little children do, finding the breast

For all that lawns and sindons may conceal."
Thereat she stepped three paces, touched with foot
A glossy dark green creeper, flat of leaf,
Tendrilled along a hollow in the sand,
With knotty nuts upon it, half a score.
"This is the *nara*," quoth she, "dig and dig,
And ye shall find sweet water at its roots,
Half a bow's length beneath. Also its fruit
Is comforting and good. But for more need,
Look yonder, Master, where a thin line juts
Against the golden sun. A branch ye thought?
A spray of goat-grass? Nay, dear brave dull eyes,
Yon is an estridge neck. I clap my hands,
The loutish housewife rises and makes off,
Who hath prepared the evening meal for us."
She laughed and shouted loud; the great bird starts,
With fluttered plumes and cackling beak, and flies;
And while some dig the water, King! we find
A score of great new ivory eggs, the clutch
Of many a hen; so sup on lavish fare.

North again, north we row. The new stars sink;
Old stars begin to rise; past long white cliffs
Athwart quick Bengo's mouth; under a rock
Yellow as sulphur, with black hanging woods,

And then by shores, striped red and white, we win
Into discoloured seas. A mighty flood
Pours from the land, staining the blue waves brown,
And bearing broken trunks and whirling round
Patches of rooted grass and reeds. High up
We see, inshore, long-reaching stretch of stream
That shows no farther bank. It is the mouth
Of a right mighty river;* not thy Nile
Hath nobler gateway, Pharaoh! to the deep.
At the point's hither side opens a cove
Where turtles breed. We beach our ships i' the smooth
And pitch a camp. Presently flock the folk
Naked, shock-headed, speaking words uncouth,
Friendly but curious. Gondah trades with them,
Cloth, and brass wire, and beads for kids, and meal.
'Midst these a grey-haired wanderer from the waste—
Beareth the Eastern face,—hath journeyed far,
Knoweth the mighty stream and nameth it
Enzaddi—"Mother of all Waters,"—saith
It riseth out of great lakes far away,
Bemba and Bangweolo—runneth vast,
Full-volumed, fertilizing, rich with woods,
Seven hundred leagues, and twice doth fling its bulk

* Congo.

Down monstrous rock-walls. When this ancient spies
The tribe-mark tinctured blue on Nesta's arm,
Prone falleth he to earth, kisseth her foot,
Saith in strange tongue words that well pleased the ear
Of the listening Lady. "Truly he hath come,"
She whispers, "from the East Sea to the West,
His eyes have seen the breadth of Africa;
A Makalanga too! 'tis wonderful!"

That night, as many nights before, we sate
Girt by a fence of thorns, in light robes wrapt,
The camp-fires brightly burning, flinging sparks
Into the murk, and lighting trees and tents,
While the wide river and the meeting sea
Made us a sleep-song. Other voices too
The lonely Libyan night hath; creatures wild,
That hate the sun, make by the moon and stars
Their hunting time. You heard the river-horse
Splash in the reeds; the owl hoot from his branch;
The grey fox bark; the earth-bear whine and sniff;
The apes,—four-handed people of the wood—
Fretfully chatter; then the spotted dog
Utter his devilish laugh, and the lynx scream,

Till near at hand the lion, lord of beasts,
Lays muzzle on the ground, and roars a peal
Of angry thunder, rolling round the hills,
Hushing the frighted wilderness. Far off,
His neighbour lions catch the thunder up,
And with fierce answers shake the shuddering ground.
As so we lay with those rough voices ringed,
The watch-fires gleaming back from the green eyes
That showed and shone and vanished, Nesta raised
Her eyelids from what seemed a dream, and asked:—
"Know'st thou, my Master! what the lions say?
They have been kings: they are the kings to-night;
All this is theirs; the river and its reeds,
The hills, the thickets, and the roaming game,
The village people and their lives—all's theirs,
And this dark world must listen when they speak,
Will listen many an age. Yet it is spite
Makes them to roar so bitter; centuries pass
Like moons at last, and after centuries
The lions know that down this stream will come
A white man bringing to the darkness dawn
As doth the morning star; opening the gates

Which shut my people in, till good times hap,
When cattle-bells, and drums, and festal songs
Of peaceful people, dwelling happily,
Shall be the desert's voice both day and night:
The lions know and roar their hate of it.
Hark! *Ist-a-la-ni! Ist-a-la-ni!* cries
The Marsh Hen: knowing who will come at last;
And wolves snarl — dreaming of 'the Stone-Breaker.'" *

* Native name of Sir H. M. Stanley.

END OF THE SIXTH DAY

# THE SEVENTH AND LAST DAY

# THE SEVENTH AND LAST DAY

*Ithobal, braving dread and doubt*
*Hath sailed all Africa about:*
*The thirty-seventh moon doth bring*
*The Tyrian crews to Egypt's King.*

MAY the King live for ever! Ithobal
A little longer prays the Royal ear
That he may tell the wondrous finishing
Of this great travel: how thy ships came home,
Most Mighty! to the land which sent them forth.

Twenty-six moons had waxed and waned. 'Twas Bul,
The third month, when we left Enzaddi's mouth,
And once more followed wheresoever led
That ceaseless coast. Too long it were to name
Journey by journey, changeful stage by stage,
What lands, what seas, unfolded from the void
Their new-shewn pictures; what strange chances fell;
What sudden perils. Each day was a scroll

With cares laborious and hard toils unsealed,
Whereon the high Gods wrote that which they
would.
Yet with our vessels fresh-accoutred, gear
Made good, sails mended, meal and meat in store,
And those companion breasts tempered to brass
By hardships and a hundred rescuings,
Safe wended we, and fearless, all those leagues
From the great river's mouth. Rose the Red Point,
Past tall Zeudana's bluff; across a bay
Where seven black rocks stand up, we spy a nook
Cup-shaped, the crater of some fiery mount,
Which burned itself to stillness ages gone.
Where flame, and rage, and ravage, had been
fierce,
We lay embosomed, under white cliffs laced
With tender film of ferns, and delicate buds,
Purple, or gold, or rose, of climbing plants,
Whereon birds, small as bees, sucked honey-blooms
With long-curved bills: themselves finer than
flowers,
So painted and so gemmed. Thus, where had
boiled
The molten rock and sulphurous fumes had
belched,

The sea lay tranquil as in mother's lap,
Whom the babe sucks asleep: so doth the Deep
Shift its large humours. Also, King! I saw
A marvel here. Who hath before us known
A shellfish slay a man? The shore folk use
In companies, or one by one, to search
The coral-banks for food; at low tide these
Are live with lowly creatures of the deep,
Sea-flowers, sea-worms, sea-slugs, and cuttle-fish;
At flood the waves wash all. There is a shell*
Twin-valved, prodigious, white, with fluted lips,
Russet outside, hides in the bladder-weed;
Clam-like, the body of it fleshy, strong,
The cup a cubit broad. This thing lurks there
With opened edge waiting what meat the spray
Will waft it: fed or handled, it doth close
With grip of iron jaw. We saw a wretch
Lie drowned upon the reef, one black foot caught
In the toothed shell; the hapless carcass cast
Limp on the rocks, like a brown sea-weed blade.
He, wading to his shallop, planted step
On the clam's shell, and this, grasping him hard
Had chained him till the slow sea rose and
choked.

* Tridacna Gigas.

Later I spake with those wise in the ways
Of coast and current; people of the beach
Who taught us we were come to where the shore,
Not longer trending northward, turns and leads
Straight towards the setting sun; seven hundred leagues
Some did suppose, or five, or six, some said:
Yet, if we chanced the fortune of good airs,
And struck across, well-watered and well-stored,
Rowing by night and day when fair winds failed,
Either on high sea we should founder, lost;
Or, by bold venture 'scape a two moons' toil,
Skirting Biafra and deep-bayed Benin.
Which, sooth! we did; first coming happily,
At seven-score leagues, to a long island laid
Over against Aranga—'tis a stream
Runs from the inner hills.* And yet anew
We pushed forth hazarding, and crossed sea-wastes,
Which in the hurricane heave mountainous,
But now slept blue and smooth. Nearing that coast
The blue waxed grey and brown; the white foam foul—
Long ere the topmost distant peak was eyed—
With flooding forth of some great stream,† that sent

* Cape Lopez. † River Niger.

The rains of half her Libya to the main
By many a mouth. With the land-water blew
The land-wind, and the muddied waves lapped low
Across the face of Benin all the way
To Eko Island.*

Yet one marvel more
I had foregone, Great Pharaoh! to recount.
Behold these hides which my slaves lay at foot
Of thy Royal seat,—skins brown and dun—we
stripped
The shaggy coverings from the strangest beast
Thy servant's eyes have seen. Nigh to that stream—
Zaire or Enzaddi—opens in the land
A deep laguna, fenced afar with hills,
And fed by water-ways, which wind and creep
Through forests dark with giant trees, and hung
From glade to glade with curtains of grey moss
And snake-like climbing vines. In its dense shades,
Lord of the gloom, there dwells a monstrous ape,†
Ugly and dreadful, in his strength most fierce,
But man-like, fashioned wholly as a man,
A wide flat face, small ears, a hairy crown,
Nostrils of blackamoor, and human ways:

* Lagos. † Gorilla.

Short-legged with mighty loins and arms that reach
To touch his shin as he doth walk erect.
For walk he doth, with woodland staff in palm,
Most like a savage forester; the hand
Short-thumbed, but framed to skilful purposes,
Hath a so stubborn grip that he can grasp
The python's throat and squeeze its life away
Spite of its writhing coils; or break a jaw
Of bounding leopard. In the tree he builds
A nest of boughs; there keeps his sylvan home
His one ill-favoured wife, children, and store
Of forest fruit. Yet though the creature eats
No food save roots and berries, not a beast
So mad, so dangerous. The lion shrinks
To cover, seeing on its hunting-path
This "Man of the Woods" approach, rough staff in hand,
And huge arms aching for some foe to slay.
The twain who wore these coats my comrades met
Where no tree gave them refuge, so they fought
Two against ten, and ere they yielded breath,
Cracked the neckbone of one, and ripped up one
Among my hunters, dying savagely
With cries like wounded men.

At Eko Isle

Once more we saw the gem of Ishtar gleam
Above the marge, the North Star. Speeding thence,
Through fair and foul we pass Whydah's lagoon;
Cast anchor in a river flowing down
From Ningo Hill. Here are a savage folk,
Dahoms and Ashantees, eating men's flesh;
Filling the drink-bowls of their gods with blood;
Cities of skulls and slaughter. Joyfully
We parted from the cruel land; set course
For Accra, for Amkwana; rock and bay
Of hot Secondi, and the Three Point cape.
Next the Assini stream with spacious lakes
Behind its sands. Then ever westward came
Long rampart of red cliffs, Yawoda crag—
Striped rose and white like a flamingo's wing—
Jutting to sea. Here is the Ivory coast,
Abode of elephants; at Nano town,
Which hath its huts on bank of Berebi,
Door-posts and lintels were of milky tusks,
And tusks lay heaped in sheds, and tusks did mark
One man's field from another's; these I deemed
Were spoils of elephants which die of age.
One lordly brute of the vast herds we spied
Might sack and scatter Nano. Still our coast

Went westward till we make the Cape of
Palms *—
Tree-capped, tied to the shore by thread of sand:
Behind its groves a river good for rest.
A strange lure cheated us in nearing. Grey
The mist lay round the cape; in its faint veil
The rocks and reefs, the banks and beaches,
hung,
With trees and towns and hills in the still air.
It was the lying light, the mirage; such
Mocks thirsty desert men, drawn from their path
By vision of fair water, shadowing palms
And men and temples. I had deemed all true
Till Nesta said, "Have heed, Master! of this
At entering; 'tis a trick of fiends who dwell
In storm-clouds and the evil weather."

Now
Once more the Ram and Dove upon our prows
Looked homeward; once more northerly we steer.
By Monkey Island, and by Wappi Head,
Wended we well to Butu, and a stream,
Pobâmo named, next Tembo, and some isles
Green with bananas; so by many a stage

* Cape Palmas.

We sight a promontory, forest-clad
With great hills piercing heaven; 'tis the mount
Of lions.* Northward of the dark green ridge
Opens a stream, and I must enter there
For that the Silver Dove hath sprung a leak.
Yestereve and all night by some ill-hap
Came in the sea, and soaked our grain, and swamped
The forward hold, till half my oarsmen baled,
And half were rowing. In the stream we find
A shelving shore, and beached. 'Sooth! strange to see!
It is a sword-fish that hath wrought us this,
Nigh ruining our venture. Yea! a fish
Six cubits long that hath for nose a beak
Bony, shaped like a sword, sharp like a sword
And hard as tempered steel; strong fins and tail
That in its times of anger and attack
Drive it like arrow through the waves. It hates
The whale; mistook us for its enemy;
And dealt us deadly thrust. The blade had gone
Through half a cubit of fir plank and oak—
Loosening a beam end—where the sea poured in.
The fish had broken off; his sword stood out
A span clear in the hold.

* Sierra Leone.

By Matakong—
A lovely isle with sloping lawns and groves—
We pass to Pongo, and the channel made
By safe Arango. Next was Bulamà
And Jeba river; then long stretch of sands
To Kisamanze and the Gambia,
By Dakar and Goree to a green cape *—
Slopes from the sea-shore towards two rounded
paps
O'er-looking isle and bay. Here came thy ships
Westermost, Mighty Pharaoh! of their road:
Nothing lay west of us except a main
Known only to the Sun, which dippeth there
Under the World. And thence to Senegal
And her white headland,† and red Bojador,
Eastward the shore now bends. Cape Juby lifts
A green hill, and a stream flows to the sea
Beneath white banks. Onward by Mogador
We mark huge Atlas rear his snowy neck
To hold the sky aloft: this side and that
The lean grey hills peer over to the brine
To gaze on voyagers whose ships are come
From other hills so far, from other shores
Which watch the Day spring from another East.

* Cape Verde. † Cape Blanco.

Then as I stood upon my steering deck
Eyeing the bare crags pass, and new peaks spring
Out of the blue, Nesta was by my side,
And took my hand whispering: "Master! I saw
Good omen at the dawn. Kneeling to pray,
When the first gold lit on Astarte's bird
Which is upon our stem, I marked her stretch
Her silver wings to all their glittering length,
And arch her shining neck, and utter low
The love-note of a Dove; I think she hears
Some home sounds in the air, or seeth that
Which promiseth us rest." Even as she spake,
What mark I? On the left two pointed hills,
Facing them, seven low tops; and in their front
A black cliff* rising from the rippled blue,
Which suddenly is narrowed so that land,
To left as well as right, hangs in the sky,
A violet film: a film which gathers form,
Deepens to green and purple, and then grows
A huge rock,† like a couching lion, set
Over against the cliff. I know! I know!
Here is the Ocean-Gate! Here is the Strait,
Twice before seen, where goes the Middle Sea
Unto the Setting Sun and the Unknown—

* Cape Spartel. † Gibraltar.

No more unknown. Ithobal's ships have sailed
Around all Africa. Our task is done!
These are the Pillars! this the Midland Sea!
The road to Tyre is yonder! Every wave
Is homely. Yonder, sure, Old Nilus pours
Into this sea the Waters of a World,
Whose secret is his own, and thine and mine.

Great Lord! no need to tell thee how we came
By coasts familiar, and by well-tried paths,
Quit of our quest. Thirty-five moons had waned
Since we sailed forth of Suph. My two brave ships
Kept the sea safe. The third, if the Gods pleased,
Deep ballasted with gold, was back with thee.
Out of my sixteen-score of gallant souls
There lacked some five-score, lost by land or sea,
In battle slain, or torn by prowling beasts,
Or dead by evil airs; and one I slew,
The traitor Nimroud. Of our native aids
The most are lusty, well-contented, free,
Glad to be part of this high enterprise,
And see the great new world. But most I bless
The holy Gods above and my fair Star,
Because I carry back, unharmed, serene,
Radiant with joy at this our victory

And thine, O King of Kings! her who was Life
And Soul, and Guide, and Good of all we did:
My Lady Nesta of the noble heart.

Ah! like to one who dreams that he must die,
And waking finds him at a golden feast;
Or like to one whose hapless eyes have lost
The lovely light of day, when sudden gleam
Of the world's joy and glory comes again,
And all his darkness dies; so was it now,
Great Pharaoh! with thy servants, day by day,
Conning the happy sea-signs. What to us
Any more irked the straining at the oar,
The narrow bed, the hard-worn plank, the toil
To beach and unbeach? In our ragged sails
Flapped triumph: in our oar-ports, worn to gloss
By oar-looms grinding through five thousand leagues,
Shone pride. My merry rowers loved the ships
So staunch, so faithful, and so friendly grown—
Their good sea-houses. Pipe and drum kept time
More lively than before to the light song
Of Thalamite and Zeugite, as we skimmed
Over the autumn waters to that mouth,
Where thy broad Nilus voids his western wave;

And battered, torn and lean, but jubilant,
Joyous, and eager for the grace of this—
To see thy face and kneel before thy feet,
And lay thee, for thy favour and thy trust,
The Secret of the Unknown Earth made known.
For this we did rejoice: for this are here.

All this did Hodo with a heedful pen,
On the papyrus write, finishing:—

*Then*
*On ending of the seventh day of the story*
*Our Lord the King, sitting in state and glory,*
*Rose from his throne, and in his robe and crown,*
*With gentle smiling majesty came down.*
*Before him on their faces that good day*
*Ithobal and his people lowly lay,*
*The Lady Nesta and his Captains two,*
*And in a ring behind their sea-stained crew:*
*And yet behind, the negroes and the slaves,*
*While on the stones their bows and spears and glaives,*
*Rusted in battle, lay; with wild-beast hides*
*And bars of gold and pearls, and what besides*

*Their sea spoils were. And our Lord Pharaoh laid*
*Ithobal's head upon his breast, and said:—*
"*Ithobal, Son of Magon! for thy King,*
*Lo! thou hast wrought a wondrous famous thing,*
*Vaster than victories; I name thee chief*
*Of all my navies, and I give thee fief*
*Of lands along my Nilus, grove and field,*
*Such as shall royal wealth and greatness yield;*
*As many schœnes as on the dreadful sea*
*Thou hast accomplished of leagues for me.*"
*Then did our gracious Lord raise by the hand*
*The lady, speaking soft:* "*We understand*
*Thy wisdom, Daughter! and thy work and worth;*
*Thou art not of our Egypt by thy birth,*
*But shalt be, for thy deeds, and by my grace*
*Princess and Priestess in a chosen place:*
*I make thee Lady hence of Amen-ru;*
*Thine now the shrine, and thine its revenue.*"
*Afterwards many a gift with liberal word*
*Amongst those others did our mighty Lord*
*Bestow; and bade Aahmes—Chamberlain—*
*Pour largesse for them, gold and robes and grain,*
*And palace meats for life; the slaves set free;*
*Hanno and Sothës, officers to be;*

*Handah and Gondah by rich boons repaid;*
*A house and dowry for each faithful maid,*
*Asenath and her fellow. Therewithal*
*A bounteous feast was set in Pharaoh's hall*
*And all the city kept high revelry*
*Till the moon clomb into the starry sky.*

(NESTA is heard singing)

*Under Astarte's moon,*
*At the soft night's silvery noon*
*Sleepeth my city of Neith,*
*The city of Pharaoh slumbereth;*
*The palms are like columns black*
*With the dark-blue heaven at their back,*
*And the shadows of porch and wall*
*On the porphyry pavements fall*
*Like purple carpets of silence. No lack*
*Of joy in the white-walled street*
*Where townsman and kinsman meet:*
*And the houses are busy with what they say*
*Of the marvellous, glorious, goodly array*
*When Ithobal stood before the Throne*
*And for seven days opened a world unknown.*

*This marvellous tale of the Far-away*
*And the secrets of Gods all shown.*
*In his palace Lord Pharaoh is glad*
*For the splendour of this gain had.*
*In their huts the people are proud*
*For the fame of this deed, long and loud,*
*Which shall make them renowned alway.*

*In harbour the galleys lie*
*Safe under the spangled sky;*
*Each weary sea-worn keel*
*No longer doth fret, or feel*
*The smiting wave and the mournful sigh*
*Of the tempest which gathers to wreck.*
*Steady and smooth is each deck;*
*The tired sails sleep, and the painted eye*
*On each red prow is at rest.*
*For all is come to the best*
*And no more dangers to search and spy.*
*The oars themselves seemed to keep*
*A pleasure and peace in their sleep*
*As the moonbeams shine on the glistening oar-ports nigh.*

*And I, happy Nesta, the while*
*Sit in the sight of Nile,*

*In the marble temple of Amen-ru:*
*For I am the priestess, and what I do*
*With the lands and temple and town*
*Is done henceforth with mine own.*
*And Ithobal's head is on my lap;*
*The Gods have given good hap;*
*I am here with my Lover and Lord and King,*
*And our tale to the sistrum I sing;*
*There shall never be nobler told or shown;*
*For now are the Strange Seas known.*

THE END

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